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"The Moving Finger writes and, having writ,
Moves on; nor all thy piety and wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it."

— **OMAR KHAYYAM** —

THE MOVING FINGER

[ANTHOLOGY OF ESSAYS IN LITERARY AND AESTHETIC CRITICISM BY INDIAN WRITERS]

Edited by

V. N. BHUSHAN

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The Moving Finger

"As the existence of a great river in a civilised country involves that of dykes, and quays, and bridges, so the existence of a great literature implies the ministrations of literary officials engaged in winnowing the bad from the good, and helping the latter to permanence."

—RICHARD GARNETT—

कवीः कवयते काव्यम् ।
रसं जानाति पंडिताः ।।

AND HAVING WRIT * * *

The unimaginably heavy chariot wheels of an Indian Deity need the cumulative effort of innumerable devotees to give them momentum! And when that is done—the rest of the processional journey is comparatively easy. So is it in the realm of the abstract. The interim between an ambition and its realisation is like a phantasma. But when once part at least of the aspiration is achieved, anxiety is somewhat allayed and the rest appears to be within grasp—almost as a natural consequence. But the truth of this has not yet become real to me in my experience of the KIRANAVALI series. Between the hour of its conception and the first motion of its birth—the series assumed the proportion of a superhuman task. And so it remains still ! The coming into light of *The Peacock Lute* has not made it much smooth sailing for its successors. On the other hand, its belated nativity—thanks to a variety of unexpected happenings—has complicated matters. Scheduled to make its appearance last June, *The Peacock Lute* has danced into being on the threshold of this year! And the second in the series—*The Moving Finger*—comes now almost treading on the toes of its predecessor !—leaving not much time for reflection between the first rapture and the next. And, what is worse, the prospect of the two remaining anthologies has been dimmed to some extent by the inexorable ukases of the 'Paper Gods'—which are making the conditions of printing and publication worse day by day. But there is nothing like faith—faith in one's own sincerity and determination; and nothing like hope—hope in the inherent fecundity of good dreams to burst into life ! All obstacles in the path of progress are temporary, and will have to vanish before the onslaughts of enthusiasm. All thought of future is like a night journey along the road where one has for his companions only the silent memories of the footfalls over the distance already traversed. He throws his shadow behind him who carries the lamp in front of him !

*

The Moving Finger has not moved into being without difficulty! As in the case of the previous anthology, so in this, the Editor had to undergo much trouble and work under many handicaps. The greatest desideratum in matters like these is the absence of a central source of information. Indo-English literature has not yet learnt to organise itself, to give its branches strength of outline and beauty of form. It still remains an amorphous mass—with only a name of vague associations and no solid local habitation. Indo-English criticism, for instance, lies scattered in newspapers and periodicals and in the files of the writers themselves. And it is ever so difficult to have access to all these. Sometimes, even appealing letters to the persons concerned do not evoke any response! Inevitably, therefore, the Bibliography suffers from several lacunae. While this is one source of worry, another is provided by the amount of material available. The number of writers listed in the bibliography and the amazing amount of work produced by them—does not admit of easy selection for purposes of an anthology like this. The main aim with which *The Moving Finger* has been ''scaffolded'' is to bring into prominent light some of the substantial contributions that our writers have made to English literary criticism in particular and to aesthetics in general. For this purpose, writers and their work have been carefully chosen. The selections do show, I believe, the many-sided interests of our writers and the different critical methods used by them. And if this anthology succeeds in convincing the reading public, both in this country and abroad, that Indo-English criticism has practically established itself as a respectable branch of literary activity, it will have more than served its purpose.

In the preparation of this volume I had to put so many friends under obligation for help in this or that matter. To all of them—too numerous to be mentioned here—I offer my warmest thanks. To the writers included here—I give my gratitude for their ready and willing co-operation. I am particularly indebted to Sir S. Radhakrishnan for permitting me to reproduce in these pages Tagore's essay which originally appeared in *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*. The printers and publishers have their share of my generous thanks!

And thus . . . . *The Moving Finger* . . . . moves on !

—V. N. B.

THE LIGHT FROM HEAVEN

Convention has assigned to criticism a somewhat secondary place in the hierarchy of art and literature. A critic—whose professed function is to criticise—is very rarely regarded as being on a level with the creative artist. Now and then an Aristotle, a Boileau, a Dryden, a Johnson, or an Arnold may acquire great authority as a critic, as a codifier of literary laws and emphasizer of principles of aesthetic enjoyment. But even so they are never exalted above the creative writers. A literary artist, who also happens to be a good critic, is never so much honoured and remembered for his critical theories as for his creative productions. Dante, Wordsworth and Coleridge have said some very fine things with regard to literary and aesthetic criticism. But who values this higher than their poetry? The truth of the matter is that critical activity—whether of the professed critic or the accidental critic—has always been looked upon as a subsidiary and second rate activity.

This is not all. Several are the instances in which critics have been abused as "those cut-throat bandits in the path of fame." Keats referred to them contemptuously as "dank-haired." Shelley impaled them in his *Adonais* and Byron heaped ridicule on them in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. Even at present time critics are not entirely exempt from adverse criticism. Mr. Osbert Stilwell is nothing if not critical when he says that "the critic is popularly supposed to have a more logical mind, to wield a more consistent pen than the poets." But the relieving feature is that the critics have had, and continue to have, their share of praise as well. And this is as it should be, for, really speaking, the work of the genuine critic is invaluable indeed. A good critic is not to be regarded as a mere intellectual midwife. He is at once an interpreter and a custodian of literature.

Both ideally and etymologically—criticism is judgment. A critic, therefore, is a judge, a judge of values, and his essential function is to pronounce judgment upon the values of creators and works of art. The words *judge* and *judgment* have a legalistic meaning and a judicial sense. A judge, thus, is one who has both social and legal status, and his utterances are authoritative. The art-critic, as things are, does not enjoy this privilege and, consequently, his verdicts do not always carry weight with the public. It must be understood here that the critic's function is not to acquit or condemn authors and works, but to explain their content and to exhibit their values. The laws of literature and the principles of aesthetics are not iron rules of unquestionable sovereignty. And no critic can ever assume the attitude of an attorney in their behalf. Literary judgments that bear the 'legalistic' or 'judicial' stamp do harm to themselves and ill-serve their purpose. There can never be any finality in matters of art and aesthetics. No judgment in these spheres is absolutely valid or utterly invalid. Each judgment is a further step in the advancement of thought and progress of perception. Casabiancan adherence to the so-called established standards or blind reverence for accepted models does not necessarily warrant infallibility of judgment. On the other hand, it warps clear personal perception and impedes the development of personal experience. "Nothing so contributes to the perversion of art as these authorities set up by criticism"—said Tolstoy once. A good critic should have wide acquaintance with standards and modes-- but not to the extent of obfuscating his native insight and sensitiveness. Literature, like life, is not a flux but a growth, and growth implies new experiments, new experiences and new expressions. And that which is new cannot be cast in old moulds. Since matter and form are inseparable, new (subject-) matter seeks the help of new forms. A good critic is one who understands these things sympathetically-- instead of just testing them by ready-made rules and established standards.

In all this there is no illicit suggestion that theories, principles and standards have no place in criticism. I am not making out a case for *impressionist* criticism of the type suggested by Jules Lemaître. According to this well-known French writer—" criticism, whatever be its pretensions, can never go beyond defining the impression which, at a given moment, is made on us by a work of art wherein the artist has recorded the impression which he received from the world at a certain hour." This kind of criticism is sure to result in a gallimaufry of irrelevancies and arbitrary pronouncements. It is true that any talk of standards in matters of art and aesthetics is vague, if not confusing. But criticism must be based on some criteria because criticism is valuation, a search for the qualitative content of a work of art. It is in this sense that criticism, like art, becomes an experience, and it is thus that judgment becomes genuine.

Genuine criticism must take particular care to avoid confusion of values. A critic is at liberty to adopt the method of criticism he likes —the aesthetic, the philosophic, the impressionistic, the biographical, the psychological, the sociological, the historical, the textual, the scientific—but to believe that a particular method alone yields the best result is the height of folly. No one method possesses an exclusive prerogative to appraise the value of a work of art. Each method has its own virtues and weaknesses and, therefore, its own advantages and disadvantages. Without having an irrepressible obsession for this method or that, this category or that, this standard or that, a critic should fix his eye on his main task, namely, discrimination and unification. "Judgment," it has been said, "has to evoke a clearer consciousness of constituent parts and to discover how consistently these parts are related to form as a whole." In other words, analysis and synthesis should be one of the main concerns of the critic. But analysis does not mean a merciless vivisection of all kinds of details, even as synthesis does not mean pointless generalization. The critic should take into account the essential component parts of a work of art in order to perceive first the material of the artist, second, the way in which he has treated it, and third, the manner in which he has fused it into an artistic unity. Synthesis is unification, 'the creative response of the individual who judges,' the appraisal of the living harmony and the significant pattern in a work of art, the revelation of its essential characteristic. In doing this, the critic should not neglect to take into account the particular medium made use of by the artist, and the adequacy of the form adopted by the artist to the matter he has dealt with.

There is yet another thing which a good critic should bear in mind, and that is the problem of the relationship between the permanent and the emphemeral. It is true that the meaning of these two words may be regarded only as relative. But for a working hypothesis it may be assumed that the permanent is that which has a more universal and lasting validity than the ephemeral which has only temporary value and partial appeal. Attention to this distinction is as necessary on the part of the critic as it is on the part of the artist—for it greatly makes or mars their respective work. To quote Browning : "All the bad poetry in the world (accounted poetry, that is by its affinities) will be found to result from some one of the infinite degrees of discrepancies between the attributes of the poet's soul, occasioning a want of correspondency between his work and the varieties of nature—issuing in poetry, false under whatever form, which shows a thing not as it is to mankind generally, nor as it is to the particular describer, but as it is supposed to be for some unreal neutral mood, midway between both and of value to neither, and living its brief minute simply through the indolence of whoever accepts it in his inability to denounce a cheat." What is true of poetry is true of criticism as well.

A critic, therefore, should exercise his vigilant eye in order to distinguish between the enduring and the evanescent, the lasting and the perishing. The critic's responsibility in this matter these days is much more than it ever was—in these days when tastes fluctuate more rapidly than prices, when values change more quickly than fashions, and when the temporary wears the garb of the transcendental. Today literature, in all countries, has become a mass production. Writers after writers appear in print—praised by the publishers and recommended by the reviewers. The traditional barriers of good taste—"which made the many who did not appreciate the best bow down to the judgment of the few who did"—are being constantly trampled upon. And values —even fundamental values—have not much meaning except in terms of rupees, annas and pies. It is, therefore, imperative that a critic should learn to discriminate between the one that remains and the many that pass away.

In this aspect, as well as in other aspects of his work, a critic—human that he is—is sure to be influenced by a strong subjective element, a bias or a predilection, which in itself is intricately bound up with the very conception of individuality. Considered deeply, all things--including Art and Beauty—are relative. Our perception, our awareness, our temperament, our receptive capaciy—these colour our attitude to things and our appreciation of them. Even the best critic cannot altogeher escape from these considerations, or limitations, if you please to call them so. But what the critic should do—and what the average man cannot do--is to attempt to free himself from these, to achieve as much catholicity and objectivity as possible, in order to discover the intrinsic virtue of a work of art, to behold the particular form that "eternal beauty wandering on her way" assumes in a particuar work of art. A work of art—a poem or a picture—belonging to a particular "school" or a particular "style"—may not correspond with his personal predilection, may not rouse his special sympathy or evoke his deepest response. Even so, he will be a positively bad critic if he closes his eyes or shuts his sensitiveness to the beauty and worth that lie embedded in it. Differences in critical opinions are inevitable—for the intuitions of even the most cultivated of men are much veiled by deep mental encrustations. The six blind men of Hindustan in the poem are all right—partially right, and so is every critic according to the light in him. Only he should not be an abject victim of whims and idiosyncracies, and justify them as emanations of his subjectivity. Further, a special taste, a particular bias, or a peculiar mode of perception, if fondled and pursued too much, will develop into an iron mould or petrified formula—refusing to receive or even see other experiences and excellences in the multiform variety of Art and Beauty. It behoves the critic, therefore, so to refine his insight, his taste, his vision, in short, his subjectivity, in such a manner that without obliterating his individuality he should be alive to qualities, essences, values, attractions and aspects other than those for which he has keen personal preference. " A philosophy of experience," observes John Dewey, "that is keenly sensitive to the unnumbered interactions that are the material of experience is the philosophy from which a critic may most safely and surely draw his inspiration. How otherwise can a critic be animated by that sensitiveness to the varied movements toward completion in different total experiences that will enable him to direct the perceptions of others to a fuller and more ordered appreciation of the objective content of works of art ?"

A good critic, then, ennobles his profession, enriches the field of his work, and renders inestimable service both to literature and life. The critic owes his first allegiance to the creative artist—in as much as it is his foremost function to reveal the hidden significance and the intrinsic value in the artist and his work. And the next duty of the critic is to help the uninitiated and uninspired to grasp correctly the significance and value he has discovered. In doing this the critic indirectly moulds the taste of those who rely upon him and gives direction to their uncultivated understanding and their indiscriminate appreciation. He refines their artistic consciousness and aesthetic perception and helps them to imbibe in themselves factors and forces that constitute culture. Further, the critic enriches and enlarges creative effort itself. His appraisals and evaluations, his warnings and encouragements, his interpretations and suggestions—are a constant source of unfailing inspiration to the artists themselves. It is thus that the critic becomes the ally of the artist, not his shadow or parasite.

If so, why should the crtic still be regarded as a being of inferior activity, as one who pursues his vocation on a lower plane ? It cannot be denied that the material of the critic is different from that of the artist. The artist deals with life—real and ideal, whereas the critic deals with life as depicted by the artist. The artist distils the essence of life ; the critic distils the essence of that essence. This difference being noted, let it be remembered that the process which both the artist and the critic adopt for distilling their respective essences is the same. Selecting, analysing, feeling, pondering, valuing, grouping, composing, creating—this is what both the artist and the critic have to do. And if the artist has need of inspiration in his work, so has the critic in his. " It seems to me that the poets, by divine grace, are with us the interpreters of the gods "—said Ion to Socrates. And that ancient master of unsullied wisdom asked the rhetorical question —" You rhapsodists, are you not the interpreters of the facts? . . . you are, consequently, the interpreters of the interpreters." The meaning is clear—the interpretation of the poets as well as that of the critics is the result of divine inspiration. Pope echoed a similar sentiment in the lines—

> **Both must alike from Heaven derive their light,**
> **These born to judge, as well as those born to write.**

If artistic appreciation and aesthetic enjoyment are to be regarded as rich experiences, as integral parts of the process of education that runs through the whole gamut of life, then criticism also serves a similar purpose in as much as it re-educates the educated, and refines the fine. Criticism is the opener of casements that look on faery lands forlorn, the revealer of spots of virgin green and living fountains, the scatterer of sweetness and light. Genuine criticism is unmistakably the light from heaven !

" All criticism is impertinence "—said Robert Lynd once,—more light-heartedly than seriously, I believe. Yes, criticism of a kind is impertinence, but not all criticism. The criticism that is the result of a natural indifference or of a charming complaisance, the criticism that is offensively pontifical or humiliatingly patronizing, the criticism that gets derailed before it reaches its destination, the criticism that degenerates into a department of school-mastering—such criticism is indeed irrelevant. But criticism that serves as a light unto the mind's eye, that reveals unsuspected vistas of thought and feeling, that quickens sensibility and brightens perception—how can such criticism be irrelevant ? " The effect, if not the prime office of criticism," according to Henry James, " is to make our absorption and our enjoyment of the things that feed the mind as aware of itself as possible, since that awareness quickens the mental demand, which thus in turn wanders further and further for pasture. This action on the part of the mind practically amounts to a reaching out for the reasons of its interest, as only by its so ascertaining them can the interest grow more various. This is the very education of our imaginative life ; and thanks to it the general question of how to refine more and most, on that happy consciousness, becomes for us of the last importance. Then we cease to be only instinctive and at the mercy of chance, feeling that we ourselves can take a hand in our satisfaction and provide for it, making ourselves safe against dearth, and through the door opened by that perception criticism enters, if we but give it time, as a flood, the great flood of awareness ; so maintaining its high tide unless through some lapse of our sense for it, some flat reversion to instinct alone, we block up the ingress and sit in stale and shrinking waters." Thus understood, criticism appears not as an irrelevance or idle pastime but as a necessary occupation of the thinking mind and the feeling heart. Geography does not cease to have a living interest because travelling has become common. Nor does criticism become irrelevant because the number of creative writers has increased and the circle of readers has widened. If the adoration of Art, like love of Virtue, is its own reward, then surely criticism has its legitimate place in the scheme of things. Was it not Arthur Clough who said—

> **For not through eastern windows only**
> **When daylight comes, comes in the light?**

⁂

Next only to poetry, criticism is the most extensive activity of the Indo-English writers. And like Indo-English poetry, Indo-English criticism also is slightly more than a century old. And curiously enough, the first Indo-English poet happens to be the first Indo-English critic as well. It was as an undergraduate of twenty that Kashiprosad Ghosh wrote a lengthy and brilliant review of the first four chapters of Mill's History of British India. Considered as extremely good, the critical essay was published in the *Government Gazette* for 14th February 1829, and was later reprinted in the *Asiatic Journal.* It is from this time that Indo-English criticism may be said to have begun. From then till now its story has been one of rapid rise and progress. The various stages of its development shade off so subtly into each other that it is almost impossible to trace them. But the broad fact is clear, the fact that slowly but surely most Indo-English criticism has cast aside its imitative character and acquired a characteristic individuality of its own. In the past the Indo-English critics repeated the thrice repeated—with slight ommissions or additions ; in the present they eschew imitation, take no opinion for granted, pursue their own investigation, and arrive at their own conclusions. Early Indo-English criticism was like a mountain-lake, hemmed in by circumstances, reflecting nothing else save its own bottom. Today it is a broad stream, coursing along hill and dale, mirroring the beauty of the sky above, the subtle heavings of its own heart underneath, and the charm of the lotus-melodies floating on its bosom.

The most important fact that has contributed to the growth and strength of Indo-English criticism is the long period of the study of English language and literature in this country. Ever since English missionaries came to this land and contacted our countrymen, and then established schools and colleges for their education, study of English has been an essential part of our educational curriculum. And it is a truism to say that some of us have taken to English more enthusiastically and earnestly than to our own languages, and more devotedly than perhaps some Englishmen themselves ! In the beginning it was through English teachers that we got acquainted with the beauties and graces of English language and literature; but for a long time now we have been ourselves their interpreters. In most of the thousands of schools and colleges spread all over the country, we have been teaching English, valuing it, appreciating it. Some of us who have had careers at one or the other of the English Universities may perhaps be doing this teaching and interpreting work better than the others. But whether foreign-qualified or Indian-trained—we have all been doing it, let it be added, with commendable success. This is not a piece of self-praise, a self-complacent pat on our own back, but a fact acknowledged by some of the English scholars themselves.

This intimate contact with English has inevitably resulted in extensive Indo-English criticism. Most of the workers in the field belong to the educational line—teachers in schools, lecturers in colleges or Professors in the Universities. Once in a way, a person like Mr. Mehdi Imam who is a Barrister by profession, retains his interest in Indo-English criticism and makes his brilliant contribution to it. But these are exceptions. The majority of Indo-English critics are drawn either from students or teachers of English. Some of these have done valuable researches in the subject which have brought them not only academic degrees but also recognition from authoritative persons in the field. Prof. Mohini Mohan Bhattacherjee's work on Spenser has elicited high praise from Emilé Legouis and Oliver Elton, while his *' Courtesy ' in Shakespeare* has been praised much by C. J. Sisson and Louis Cazamian. Dr. P. E. Dustoor's work in Old and Middle English was mostly published in England and attracted the careful attention of scholars. Prof. Sukumar Dutt's doctoral thesis on *The Supernatural in English Romantic Poetry* was unanimously acclaimed as a piece of original work by Professors Legouis, Garrod and Elton. Prof. K. M. Khadye's estimate of Croce's *Aesthetic* as applied to literary criticism has been warmly recommended as the best of its kind by Dr. I. A. Richards and Dr. E.M.W. Tillyard. Dr. U. C. Nag's work on the English theatre of the English Romantic Revival received the high appreciation of Prof. Allardyce Nicoll and others, while his studies of some of Shakespeare's characters received glowing compliments from Bradley, Moulton and Dowden. A host of well-known English and continental critics and writers vied with each other in congratulating Dr. C. Narayan Menon on his singular work on Shakespeare. Principal I. H. Zuberi deservedly received the unstinted praise of Prof. Grierson for his work on Donne and metaphysical poetry. Many more are the names of Indo-English writers that deserve mention in this connection. But the names mentioned here and in the bibliography are enough to show how some of our scholars have done valuable critical work.

Many of our scholars have carried on their research work in English in the English Universities. That is as it should be—for it is only there that the best guidance and the best facilities are available. Some of our own Universities have arrangements for research work in English. But, let it be confessed, they are not adequate and encouraging. In our Universities in recent times the stress has been on technical and scientific studies, or on ' paying ' subjects like economics and politics. I hope I am not revealing a secret in stating that of the eighteen Universities we have, nearly half the number have no research degrees in English at all. Some have these only in name—in the sense that no candidate has so far taken advantage of them. The University of Bombay, for instance, has both the D. Litt. and Ph.D. degrees in English, but so far only two have been the recipients of the latter. Truth to tell, it is the University of Calcutta that has done the most valuable work and shown the best results in this connection. Thanks to the work of a series of brilliant Vice-chancellors, that University has been encouraging research work in all subjects. The number of candidates who have taken their doctorate degrees in English from Calcutta is indeed encouraging. And this is what makes one ask why the rest of the Indian Universities should not do what one sister institution has been doing with credit?

This handicap of absence of facilities and encouragement apart, there is another which is equally regrettable, and that is lack of co-ordination of work. The research workers in one University do not know what their fellow-students are doing in another University ! Our periodicals sometimes publish valuable essays in literary and aesthetic criticism, but they do not all reach all places. Besides, the good work that is carried on in Associations and Societies has only 'local life,' and is not as widely known as it should be. The U. P. Branch and the Madras Branch of the English Association have done praiseworthy work in Indo-English criticism. But to how many in this country and abroad is this fact known? The Hyderabad (Deccan) centre of the Poetry Society of London has been doing quite a good lot to foster literary and cultural interests. But this also leads an obscure existence. So do several literary Societies promoted by our colleges. In some of them really appreciable work is done in Indo-English criticism—both by teachers and pupils. Some of them have ventured to publish their work. Such, for instance, are *Studies* of the Literary Studio of the Nowrosjee Wadia College, Poona, *Essays and Studies* by the members of the Literary Society of the Dayal Singh College, Lahore, the *Friday Club Annual* (Allahabad), *Scrutinies* of the Government College, Lahore, and *Discourses* of the Prince of Wales College, Jammu (Kashmir). But how many other colleges have come to know of this?—and how much attention of lovers of Indo-English criticism have these attracted ? The fact is, our attempts are haphazard and our work is not properly co-ordinated. All these desiderata can be overcome only when Indo-English literature asserts its claim for serious public attention and esablishes itself as an inescapable factor in the country's cultural life.

The fact that is stranger than fiction is that, inspite of the many existing handicaps, Indo-English criticism has grown both in strength and value. A perusal of the bibliography at the end—incomplete as it is—will reveal the amount of critical work done by our writers on a variety of subjects. I do not imply that all the work produced is of excellent worth. Some of it is derivative, while some of it is positively valueless. But some of it is really solid work—of which even the English scholars may feel justly proud ! It is work in which sincerity, enthusiasm, research, scholarship, insight and taste are in ample evidence. To master a foreign language is in itself a difficult task; to understand correctly and appreciate adequately the literature in that language is sill more difficult ; to succeed in revealing new beauties in that literature or in throwing fresh light on some of the problems connected with it—is indeed something to marvel at. It is true that our taste and training in English is acquired and not natural. But even this offers us an advantage—in so far as it helps us to value and assess English objectively and not as partisans. The English critic is sometimes too near his subject-matter, is too obsessed with his own literary traditions and conventions, that his verdicts lack the strength and purity that result out of impartiality. It is a well-known fact that some of the best available criticism concerning English language and literature has come, not from England, but from outside, from America, France, Germany, Italy and—may it be added ?—India. Valuable indeed is the work of critics like Phelps, Stoll, Maurois, Legouis, Cazamian, Brandes and others. Who can help marvelling at Legouis' monograph on Spenser or Cazamian's critique on Carlyle, or their joint volume on the History of English Literature? Was not Goethe's interpretation of Hamlet for long been regarded as the best of its kind ? It will be sheer prejudice on the part of the English not to admit that their literature has been greatly enriched by the critical contributions of foreigners. To this august band of ' outsiders ' belong the best of Indo-English critics.

And behold their erudition, earnestness, variety ! The foundations of English, the influence of *Le Lutrin* on English, English spelling and pronunciation, Cynewulf, *Beowulf,* Miracle plays, Chaucer, Spenser, the minor Elizabethans, Marlowe, Shakespeare, the Metaphysical poets, Milton's sonnets and his similes, the influence of Vondel on Milton, Nature in Eighteenth century poetry, Pope, Fielding, Johnson, Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, Keats, the Romantic Revival, the Gothic novel, Thackeray, Carlyle, George Eliot, Tennyson, the pre-Raphaelite poets, the Irish Literary Revival, W. B. Yeats, A. E., Bernard Shaw, Hardy, Masefield, Rupert Brooke, J. E. Flecker, D. H. Lawrence, Post-war Poetry, the Detective novel, the stream of consciousness theory, realism in present-day English drama, the Imagists, James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley—these are some of the important authors and aspects on which our writers have worked and produced astonishing results. Shakespeare and the many facets of his mind and art are, of course, recurring themes in Indo-English criticism—for is not Shakespeare the whetstone of all aspirants to reputation as critics ? Next to this are subjects provided by the poetry of Shelley and Keats. And others like Milton, Wordsworth and Browning are all paid important attention. In fact, the Indo-English critics have surveyed the whole range of English language and literature--often with praiseworthy results. Further, the variety of methods of criticism followed by these writers is also amazing. We have in Indo-English criticism—philological criticism, textual criticism, historical criticism, psychological criticism, philosophical criticism, biographical criticism, aesthetic criticism. Not only auhors and works but also forms of literature and aspects of aesthetics have been investigated into by our writers. The nature of tragedy, the nature of tragic relief, the nature of comedy, the structure of the Epic and the nature of the epic material, the art of the novel, the relation of poetry to aesthetic theory, poetry and creativity, Aristotle's idea of Katharsis and its scope and limitations, genius and artistic enjoyment, the religion of an artist, the structural subtlety of the sonnet, the nature and beauty of the medieval lyric, the essentials of the short-story and the one-act play—on subjects like these also Indo-English critics have shed light of considerable interest. The contribution of Indo-English criticism, therefore, is not one to be damned with faint praise or assented with civil leer, but a solid and significant achievement which merits wider and more generous recognition than what it has now. The best of Indo-English criticism—some samples of which are garnered in these pages—enshrines much that has literary, artistic, critical and aesthetic value, much that bears on its forehead the light from heaven !

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Some reasons for this intensive and extensive activity have already been mentioned. There is yet another, and a more fundamental one. It is our ancient literary and aesthetic tradition embedded in Sanskrit literature, at once the tradition of the human race in general and of our ethnic group in particular. Even a cursory glance at Prof. Sushil Kumar De's *Studies in the History of Sanskrit Poetics* is enough to prove the fact that in the past Sanskrit scholars pursued literary and aesthetic criticism both as an art and as a science, with sacred devotion. Indeed, it is curious to note that a divine origin is attributed to our *Alamkāra Shāstra.* Rajasekhara's *Kāvya-mimāmsā* mentions the story of the sacred birth of Sanskrit Poetics. Kavya-Purusha (Spirit of Poetry), the son of Saraswati (Goddess of Learning), was taught the science of Poetics by Srikantha (the self-existent Being), and commanded to spread it wide in the world. So Kavya-Purusha imparted his knowledge in eighteen *adhikaranās* to his seventeen will-born *sishyas* or pupils. These eighteen divine sages, in their turn, embodied their god-learnt lore in separate works. Thus *Kavi-rahasya* was the subject of Sahasrāksha, *auktika* of Uktigarbha, *riti* of Suvarnanābha, *anuprāsa* of Pracetāyana, *Yamaka and Citra* of Chitrāngada, *sabda-slesha* of Sesha, *Vāstava* of Pulastya, *upama* of Aupakāyana, *atisaya* of Pārāsara, *artha-slesha* of Utathya, *Ubhayālankāra* of Kubera, *Vainodika* of Kāmadeva, *Rūpaka* of Bharata, *rasa* of Nandikeswara, *dosha* of Dhishana, *guna* of Upamanyu, and *aupanishadika* of Kucamāra. This obviously mythical account is only an indication of the tendency of our ancient writers to invest the science of Poetics with supreme and inexorable authority. And it also points to the existence of excellent expounders of poetic theory in times beyond the reach of human memory. None of the works of these commentators is extant—though citations from their statements are embedded in the works of later writers. It is enough to know—and indeed something remarkable to note—that long before England and the poetry by which she is so glorious came into existence, our ancestors regarded Poetics with reverence and produced rich material in that sphere.

Sanskrit Poetics is known as *Alamkāra-Shāstra* (literally, the Art and Science of Poetic Embellishment). Several works in the subject deal with grammar, rhetoric, figures of speech, and *Kavisikshana* (education, equipment and discipline of the poet). Panini's *Vyākarana,* Ruyyaka's *Alamkāra-manjari,* Bhoja's *Saraswati- Kanthābharana,* Ksemendra's *Auchitya Vikāra,* Deveswara's *Kavikalpalata*—are examples of works of this kind. But it must not be understood that all attempts in this field were with regard to mere rhetoric. The term *Rhetoric,* used in this connection, does not adequately express or explain the scope and standpoint of the study of our ancient writers which includes the practical as well as the theoretical. Nor is the term Aesthetic very appropriate in this connection— for our modern conception of it differs much from that of our ancients. Poetics is perhaps a better word to designate the half-theoretical and half-practical discipline of our ancient writers. This constitutes "an extensive literature, ranging over a fairly long period of time, and embodying, with an abstruse technique and ingenious theories, a systematic discipline which possesses an interesting course of history." It is true that the ancient Sanskrit scholars were unaware of the subtle distinctions (which we moderns make) between Rhetoric, Poetics and Aesthetics. Like the venerable Greek, Aristotle, the Sanskrit theorists derived their ideas mainly from existing literature—which was both an advantage and a handicap. But their works are not mere dry-as-dust treatises on grammar and rhetoric, mere exhibitions of scholastic erudition and pedagogic vanity. In several of them there is much sound criticism —literary, dramatic and aesthetic—for, "it was almost impossible for the Alamkārikas, concerned as they were with form and technique, not to busy themselves with the general phenomena of literature or theories on general principles."

It is unnecessary to trace here the history of Sanskrit Poetics. But something of it may be briefly stated to indicate its volume and its value, its immensity and its diversity. Bypassing the mythical beginnings of *Alamkāra* literature, the earliest efforts of the *Nighantu* and *Nirukta* to analyse the pecularities of the general form of language and the special forms of poetic speech, and the early commentator, Bharata, we come to the historic period of its growth from about 800 B.C. From now onwards, for a thousand years nearly, Sanskrit poetics flourished—growing in strength and originality. In the first stage, before the advent of Ānandavardhana in the ninth century A.D., we have writers like Bhāmaha Udbhata and Rudraka who, though they discussed in general the fundamental problems of poetics, concerned themselves mainly with the external art of decoration and embellishment. At about the same period, writers like Dandin and Vāmana proclaimed themselves in favour of the objective beauty of poetry by means of *mārga* or *riti* (diction or manner) and the ten *gunas.* Thus both these sets of writers confined themselves to a consideration of the external form of poetry, the outward aspect of art. During the next stage, it is Ānandavardhana and the Dhvanikāra that are important. According to these new theorists, emphasis is to be placed on *rasa* in kavya, *rasa* as the very *ātman* or essence of poetry—with *dhvani* or suggestion as the means of its expression. After Ānandavardhana is the third stage which closes "with the ultimate standardisation of a complete scheme of poetics, with the *dhvani* theory in its centre, in which the divergent claims of earlier speculations are harmonised into a focus, and which finds itself finally set forth in a well-defined and precise form in the text-book of Mammata." The last stage, the post-Mammata period, is one of steady deterioration of the study of poetics. The different systems of Sanskrit poetics are sometimes grouped according to their prominent attachment to a particular theory as—the Alamkāra school, the Riti school, the Rasa school and the Dhvani school. But this classification is more convenient than correct—for the so-called schools often overlap. Sanskrit poetics was not fertilized by any one particular stream but by a number of minor tributaries and several currents and cross-currents. And it may be remembered that "the latter were indeed very important, but they never succeeded in forming into separate rivers, and the different channels originating independently or breaking away from the main course ultimately unite into one dominant and clear stream."

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Such, in brief, is the rich heritage of the modern Indo-English critic. Not that every one among us is personally acquainted with or directly influenced by the rich tradition. But whether we are intimately in touch with it or not, we cannot deny that it has become part and parcel of our intellectual awareness. The Indian mind through the ages has been refined to such high degree as to be susceptible to the subtlest shades of thought, feeling, imagery and language. Ideas of literary art and aesthetics such as those presented by Plato, Aristotle, Longinus, Horace and other European masters of old—come to us familiarly because such and better ideas have already been given to us by the Sanskrit writers on Poetics as well as by Sanskrit poets and dramatists. The theory and practice of literary criticism, principles of aesthetics, the theories about artistic enjoyment and appreciation, as given by western writers, do not surprise us as apocalyptic utterances. For instance, the paradox of tragedy—the pain that it presents and the pleasure that it affords—has been one of the recurring aesthetic problems since the days of Aristotle? But read the lines--*Parasya na parasyeti mameti na mameti cha* | *Tadāsvāde vibhāvādeh paricheclıedo na vidyate*—in *Sāhityadarpana* and see how the riddle is solved by the general explanation that the duality of impression is the basic principle of all aesthetic enjoyment. The quotation means: "It relates to some other and yet not quite to some other, it concerns me and yet does not concern me—this is the sensation that is brought by aesthetic enjoyment ; and in this experience characters and situations stand universalized, and all sense of distinction between one person and another, between one environment and another, is lost." Or consider this conception of the substance and nature of tragedy as given in the same work : *Karunādāvapi rase jāyte yat param sukham* ....*Kincha teshu yadā duhkham na kopi syāt tadunmukhah.*—"Even from the most sorrowful themes that stir up the emotions of pity and fear, the highest joy results; for, if they had been sources of pain, nobody would have been so eager to see them presented." Or take these random *subhāshitas—Vākyam rasātmakam kāvyam*; *yatobhāvah stato rasah; visva sreyah kāvyam.* Or these stray reflections on poets and poetry—*Na rishih kurute kāvyam; rasa siddhah kavisvarāh;* *mandah kavih yasa prārdhi; kavitā kanya vrinete svayam*; *apāre kāvya sansāre kaviraeva prajāpatih. Yadhā smairochate visvam tadhedam parivartatae*; *kavih rutasya padmabih; rutasya padam kavayo nipanthi guhanāmāni dadhire parāni; nirankusāh kavayah.* In all these scattered observations of our ancient poets and critics are embedded thought-gems and wisdom-pearls—of artistic and aesthetic worth. Such is our staple intellectual food. The Indo-English critics are born into this enviable heritage and, as such, are supremely qualified to be critics and interpreters. With such richness of background they combine catholicity of interests, breadth of outlook, penetrating insight, keenness of vision and faculty for analysis and synthesis. It is thus that some of the Indo-English critics have produced works which would shed lustre on any letters and reflect glory on any country. In their interpretations of the manifold aspects of English literature and western aesthetics, the Indo-English critics are inspired with the idea of contributing their share to the better understanding and appreciation of these subjects. They do not indulge in this as a pleasant pastime but pursue it as a self-chosen duty—with that healthy curiosity which is the basis of all constructive work. Rightly has it been said that "it is an exceeding rapture of delight in the deep search of knowledge that maketh men manfully endure the extremes incident to that Herculean labour." The selections included in this anthology are but a part of the magnificent work done by our writers, and are intended to be a specimen of its nature, scope and quality. And I see no need for assuming an apologetic attitude in offering this volume to the public in our country and abroad. The wise will accept it, I believe, realising the import of the beautiful lines—

"From hand to hand the greeting flows,
From eye to eye the signals run,
From heart to heart the bright hope glows—
The seekers of light are one!"

—V. N. BHUSHAN.

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1. SRI AUROBINDO

[" Of all modern Indian writers Aurobindo—successively poet, critic, scholar, thinker, nationalist, humanist—is the most significant and perhaps the most interesting....In fact, he is a new type of thinker, one who combines in his vision the alacrity of the West with the illumination of the East. To study his writings is to enlarge the boundaries of one's knowledge....He is blessed with a keen intuition. Like Coleridge and Heine, he displays a piercing and almost instantaneous insight into the heart of his subject; and, what is no less important, his immense and exact knowledge of the thought and feeling of both East and West—he is an accomplished scholar in Sanskrit, Greek, Italian, French, English and Bengali—gives his judgments balance and poise. He knows that a man may be right, but not wise. He treats each word of his as though it were a drop of elixir. In all this he is unique—at least in modern India." These lines from a full page review of Sri Aurobindo's *Collected Poems and Plays* and the *Sri Aurobindo Mandir Second Annual* in *The Times Literary Supplement* (London) for July 8, 1944, though not among the best or highest tributes paid to the Herald of Light, yet reveal how his greatness is being slowly but surely recognised in the West. Sri Aurobindo is primarily a thinker and philosopher, " a yogi who writes as though he were standing among the stars, with the constellations for his companions." And this is his chief characteristic in all his compositions whether in verse or prose, whether they are poems or plays or literary criticism or philosophical disquisitions. His mellow wisdom, radiant thought and luminous style are in evidence in all his writings, and impart to them warmth and glow of the richest kind. As a literary critic, Sri Aurobindo is a rare guide and friend. His output in this field is meagre but it is pure gold in its quality. His essays on Kalidasa, Heraclitus, Quantitative Metre and Future Poetry are " not commentaries of the usual kind, but works of imaginative understanding." They are masterpieces of creative criticism. The essay, " The Poets of the Dawn," reproduced below is taken from *Arya* (Vol. V, March-May, 1919) and is one of the thirty-one essays entitled the *Future Poetry*. It is a brilliant interpretation of the work of the major English Romantic poets of the early nineteenth century. The essay reveals Sri Aurobindo's unequalled powers of intellect and insight and his enviable capacity to flash a halo of light on the chosen subject. It is a pity that *Future Poetry* is not yet shaped into a volume. When this is done, it is certain to be hailed as one of the best and brightest books of literary criticism. Himself an outstanding poet, Sri Aurobindo imports into these essays his valuable inside knowledge of poetry—rendering them judgments of unimpeachable authenticity. An advocate by inner compulsion of the international of the Spirit, Sri Aurobindo gives his verdict on the Poets of the Dawn in an illuminating manner. No theories or fashions of literary taste will ever out-date this instructive interpretation and creative criticism.]

THE POETS OF THE DAWN

I

The superiority of the English poets who lead the way into modern age is that sudden, almost unaccountable, spiritual impulse, insistent but vague in some, strong but limited in one or two, splendid and supreme in its rare moments of vision and clarity, which breaks out from their normal poetic mentality and strives constantly to lift their thought and imagination to its own heights, a spirit or daemon who does not seem to trouble at all with his voice or his œstrus the contemporary poets of continental Europe. But they have no clearly seen or no firmly based constant idea of the greater work which this spirit demands from them ; they get at its best only in an inspiration over which they have not artistic control, and they have only an occasional or uncertain glimpse of its self-motives. Thus they give to it often a form of speech and movement which is borrowed from their intellect, normal temperament or culture, which wells up as the native voice and rhythm of the spirit within, and they fall away easily to a lower kind of work. They have a greater thing to reveal than the Elizabethan poets, but they do not express it with that constant fullness of native utterance or that more perfect correspondence between substance and form which is the greatness of Shakespeare and Spenser.

This failure to grasp the conditions of a perfect intuitive and spiritual poetry has not yet been noted, because the attempt itself has not been understood by the critical mind of the nineteenth century. That mind was heavily intellectualised, sometimes lucid, reasonable and acute, sometimes cloudily or fierily romantic, sometimes scientific, minutely delving, analytic, psychological, but in none of these moods and from none of these outlooks capable of understanding the tones of this light which for a moment flushed the dawning skies of its own age or tracing it to the deep and luminous fountains from which it welled. Taine's grotesquely misproportioned appreciation in which Byron figures as the Colossus and Titan of the age while the greater and more significant work of Wordsworth and Shelley is dismissed as an ineffective attempt to poetise a Germanic transcendentalism, Carlyle's ill-tempered and dyspeptic depreciation of Keats, Arnold's inability to see in Shelley anything but an unsubstantially beautiful poet of cloud and dawn and sunset, a born musician who had made a mistake in taking hold of the word as his instrument, are extreme, but still characteristic misunderstandings. In our own day we see the singers who lead the van of the future entering with a nearer intimacy into the domains of which these earlier poets only just crossed the threshold, but the right art and technique of this poetry have been rather found by the intuitive sense of their creators than yet intellectually understood so as to disengage their form from the obstruction of old-world ideas and standards of appreciation.

Each essential motive of poetry must find its own characteristic speech, its own law of rhythms,—even though metrically the mould may appear to be the same,—its own structure and development in the lyric, dramatic, narrative and, if that can still be used, the epic form and medium. The objective poetry of external life, the vital poetry of the life-spirit, the poetry of the intellect or the inspired reason, each has its own spirit and, since the form and the word are the measure, rhythm, body of the spirit, must each develop its own body. There may be a hundred variations within the type which spring from national difference, the past of the civilisation, the cultural atmosphere, the individual idiosyncrasy, but some fundamental likeness of spirit will emerge. Elizabethan poetry was the work of the life-spirit in a new, raw and vigorous people not yet tamed by a restraining and formative culture, a people with the crude tendencies of the occidental mind rioting almost in the exuberance of a state of nature. The poetry of the classical Sanskrit writers was the work of Asiatic minds, scholars, court-poets in an age of immense intellectual development and an excessive, almost over-cultivated, refinement, but still that too was a poetry of the life-spirit. In spite of a broad gulf of difference we yet find an extraordinary basic kinship between these two very widely separated great ages of poetry, though there was never any possibility of contact between that earlier oriental and this later occidental work,—the dramas of Kalidasa and some of the dramatic romances of Shakespeare, plays like the Sanskrit *Seal of Rakshasa* and *Toy-Cart* and Elizabethan historic and melodramatic pieces, the poetry of the *Cloud-Messenger* and erotic Elizabethan poetry, the romantically vivid and descriptive narrative method of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and the more intellectually romantic vividness and descriptive elaborateness of the *Line of Raghu* and the *Birth of the War-God*. This kinship arises from the likeness of essential motive and psychological basic type and emerges and asserts itself in spite of the enormous cultural division. A poetry of spiritual vision and the sense of things behind life and above the intellect must similarly develop from its essence a characteristic voice, cry, mould of speech, natural way of development, habits of structure.

The great poets of this earlier endeavour had all to deal with the same central problem of creation and were embarrassed by the same difficulty of a time which was not ready for work of this kind, not prepared for it by any past development, not fitted for it by anything in the common atmosphere of the age. They breathed the rarity of heights lifted far beyond the level of the contemporary surrounding temperament, intellect and life. But each besides has an immense development of that force of separate personality which is in art at least the characteristic of our later humanity. Each followed his own way, was very little influenced by the others, was impelled by a quite distinct spiritual idea, worked it out in a quite individual method and, when he fell away from it or short of it, failed in his own way and by shortcomings peculiar to his own nature. There is nothing of that common aim and manner which brings into one category the Elizabethan dramatists or the contemporaries of Pope and Dryden. We have to cast an eye upon them successively at their separate work and see how far they carried their achievement and where they stopped short or else deviated from the path indicated by their own highest genius.

II

A poetry whose task is to render truth of the Spirit by passing behind the appearances of the sense and the intellect to their spiritual reality, is in fact attempting a work for which no characteristic power of language has been discovered,—except the symbolic, but the old once established symbols will no longer entirely serve, and the method itself is not now sufficient for the need,—no traditional form of presentation native to the substance, no recognised method of treatment or approach, or none at once sufficiently wide and subtle, personal and universal for the modern mind. In the past indeed there have been hieratic and religious ways of approaching the truths of spirit which have produced some remarkable forms in art and literature. Sufi poetry, Vaishnava poetry are of this order, in more ancient times the symbolic and mystic way of the Vedic singers, while the unique revelatory utterance of the Upanishads stands by itself as a form of inspired thought which penetrates either direct or through strong unveiling images to the highest truths of self and soul and the largest seeing of the Eternal. One or two modern poets have attempted to use in a new way the almost unworked wealth of poetic suggestion in Catholic Christianity. But the drift of the modern mind in this direction is too large in its aim and varied in its approach to be satisfied by any definite or any fixed symbolic or hieratic method, it cannot rest within the special experience and figures of a given religion. There has been too universal a departure from all specialised forms and too general a breaking down of the old cut channels ; in place of their intensive narrowness we have a straining through all that has been experienced by an age of wide intellectual curiosity to the ultimate sense of that experience. The truth behind man and Nature and things, behind intellectual and emotional and vital perception, is sought to be seized by a pressure upon these things themselves, and the highly intellectualised language and way of seeing developed by this age is either used as it is with more meaning or strained or moulded anew or given some turn or transformation which will bring in the intensity of the deeper truth and vision. An intellectualism which takes this turn can choose one of three methods. It may prolong the language and forms it already possesses and trust to the weight of the thing it has to say and the power of its vision to inform this vehicle with another spirit. It may strain, heighten, transfigure the language and forms into a more intensive force of image, mould and expression. Or it may strive for some new and direct tone, some sheer cry of intuitive speech and sound born from the spirit itself and coming near to its native harmonies. The moulds too may either be the established moulds turned or modified to a greater and subtler use or else strange unprecedented frames, magical products of a spiritual inspiration. On any of these lines the poetry of the future may arrive at its objective and cross the borders of a greater kingdom of experience and expression.

But these earlier poets came in an age of imperfect, unenriched and uncompleted intellectuality. The language which they inherited was admirable for clear and balanced prose speech, but in poetry had been used only for adequate or vigorous statement, rhetorical reasoning, superficial sentimentalising or ornate thought, narrative, description in the manner of a concentrated, elevated and eloquent prose. The forms of rhythmical movements were unsuitable for any imaginative, flexible or subtly feeling poetry. Their dealing with these forms was clear and decisive ; they were thrown aside and new forms were sought for or old ones taken from the earlier masters or from song and ballad moulds and modified or developed to serve a more fluid and intellectualised mind and imagination. But the language was a more difficult problem and could not be entirely solved by such short cuts as Wordsworth's recipe of a resort to the straightforward force of the simplest speech dependent on the weight of the substance of thought for its one sufficient source of power. We find the tongue of this period floating between various possibilities. On its lower levels it is weighted down by some remnant of the character of the eighteenth century and proceeds by a stream of eloquence, no longer artificial, but facile, fluid, helped by a greater force of thought and imagination. This turn sometimes rises to a higher level of inspired and imaginative poetic eloquence. But beyond this pitch we have a fuller and richer style packed with thought and imaginative substance, the substitute of this new intellectualised poetic mind for the more spontaneous Elizabethan richness and curiosity ; but imaginative thought is the secret of its power, no longer the exuberance of the life-soul in its vision. On the other side we have a quite different note, a sheer poetical directness, which sometimes sinks below itself to poverty and insufficiency or at least to thinness, as in much of the work of Wordsworth and Byron, but, when better supported and rhythmed, rises to quite new authenticities of great or perfect utterance, and out of this there comes in some absolute moments a native voice of the spirit, in Wordsworth's revelations of the spiritual presence in Nature and its scenes and peoples, in Byron's rare forceful sincerities, in the luminous simplicities of Blake, in the faery melodies of Coleridge, most of all perhaps in the lyrical cry and ethereal light of Shelley. But these are comparatively rare moments, the mass of their work is less certain and unequal in expression and significance. Finally we get in Keats a turning away to a rich, artistic and sensuous poetical speech which prepares us for the lower fullnesses of the intellectual and aesthetic epoch that had to intervene. The greatest intuitive and revealing poetry has yet to come.

Byron and Wordsworth are the two poets who are the most hampered by this difficulty of finding and keeping to the native speech of their greater self, most often depressed in their elevation, because they are both drawn by a strong side of their nature, the one to a forceful, the other to a weighty intellectualised expression : neither of them are born singers or artists of word and sound, neither of them poets in the whole grain of their mind and temperament, not, that is to say, always dominated by the æsthetic, imaginative or inspired strain in their being, but doubled here by a man of action and passion, there by a moralist and preacher, in each too a would-be " critic of life ", who gets into the way of the poet and makes upon him illegitimate demands ; therefore they are readily prone to fall away to what is, however interesting it may otherwise be, a lower, a not genuinely poetic range of substance and speech. But both in the deepest centre or on the highest peak of their inspiration are moved by powers for which their heavily or forcibly intellectualised language of poetry was no adequate means. It is only when they escape from it that they do their rare highest work. Byron, no artist, intellectually shallow and hurried, a poet by compulsion of personality rather than in the native colour of his mind, inferior in all these respects to the finer strain of his great contemporaries, but in compensation a more powerful elemental force than any of them and more in touch with all that had begun to stir in the mind of the times, —always an advantage, if he knows how to make use of it, for a poet's largeness and ease of execution, succeeds more amply on the inferior levels of his genius, but fails in giving any adequate voice to his highest possibility. Wordsworth, meditative, inward, concentrated in his thought, is more often able by force of brooding to bring out that voice of his greater self, but flags constantly, brings in a heavier music surrounding his few great clear tones, drowns his genius at last in a desolate sea of platitude. Neither arrives at that amplitude of achievement which might have been theirs in a more fortunate time, if ready forms had been given to them, or if they had lived in the stimulating atmosphere of a contemporary culture harmonious with their personality.

Byron's prodigious reputation, greater and more prolonged on the continent than in his own country, led perhaps to too severely critical an undervaluing when his defects became nakedly patent in the fading away of the helpful glamour of contemporary sympathies. That is the penalty of an exaggerated fame lifted too high on the wings or the winds of the moment. But his fame was no accident or caprice of fortune ; it was his due from the Time-Spirit. His hasty vehement personality caught up and crowded into its work in a strong though intellectually crude expression an extraordinary number of the powers and motives of the modern age. The passion for liberty found in him its voice of Tyrrhenian bronze. The revolt and self-assertion of the individual against the falsities and stifling conventions of society, denial, unbelief, the scorn of the sceptic for established things, the romance of the past, the restlessness of the present, the groping towards the future, the sensuous, glittering, artificial romance of the pseudo-East, the romance of the solitary, the rebel, the individual exaggerated to himself by loneliness, the immoral or amoral superman, all that flawed romanticism, passionate sentimentalism, insatiable satiety of sensualism, cynicism, realism which are the chaotic fermentation of an old world dying and a new world in process of becoming,—a century and a half's still unfinished process,—caught hold of his mood and unrolled itself before the dazzled, astonished and delighted eyes of his contemporaries in the rapid succession of forcibly ill-hewn works impatiently cut out or fierily molten from his single personality in a few crowded years from its first rhetorical and struggling outburst in *Childe Harold* to the accomplished ease of its finale in *Don Juan*. Less than this apparent plenitude would have been enough to create the rumour that rose around the outbreak of this singular and rapid energy. No doubt, his intellectual understanding of these things was thin and poverty-stricken in the extreme, his poetic vision of the powers that moved him had plenty of force, but wanted depth and form and greatness. But he brought to his work what no other poet could give and what the mentality of the time, moved itself by things which it had not sufficient intellectual preparation to grasp, was fitted to appreciate, the native elemental force, the personality, the strength of nervous and vital feeling of them which they just then needed and which took the place of understanding and vision. To this pervading power, to this lava flood of passion and personality, were added certain pre-eminent gifts, a language at first of considerable rhetorical weight and drive, afterwards of great nervous strength, directness, precision, force of movement, a power of narrative and of vivid presentation, and always, whatever else might lack, an unfailing energy. It was enough for the immediate thing he had to do, though not at all enough for the highest assured immortality.

/ These things which Byron more or less adequately expressed, were the ferment of the mind of humanity in its first crude attempt to shake off the conventions of the past and struggle towards a direct feeling of itself and its surrounding world in their immediate reality. But behind it there is something else which seems sometimes about to emerge vaguely, an element which may be called spiritual, a feeling of the greatness of man, the individual spirit commensurate with Nature and his world, man in communion with the greatness of Nature, man able to stand in the world in his own strength and puissance, man affirming his liberty, the claim to freedom of a force as great within as the forces which surround and seem to overwhelm him. It is a Titanism, the spirit in man seen through the soul of desire, in revolt, not in self-possession, man the fallen archangel, not man returning to godhead: but it reposes on, it is the obscure side of a spiritual reality. He could not break through the obstructions of his lower personality and express this thing that he felt in its native tones of largeness and power. If he could have done so, his work would have been of a lasting greatness. But he never found the right form, never achieved the liberation into right thought and speech of the Daemon within him. The language and movement he started from were an intellectual and sentimental rhetoric, the speech of the eighteenth century broken down, melted and beaten into new shape for stronger uses ; he went on to a more chastened and rapid style of great force, but void of delicacy, subtlety and variety ; he ended in a flexible and easy tongue which gave power to even the most cynical trivialities and could rise to heights of poetry and passion : but none of these things, however adapted to his other gifts, was the style wanted for this greater utterance. Art, structure, accomplished mould were needs of which he had no idea ; neither the weight of a deep and considered, nor the sureness of an inspired interpretation were at his command. But sometimes language and movement rise suddenly into a bare and powerful sincerity which, if he could have maintained it, would have given him the needed instrument : but the patience and artistic conscientiousness or the feeling for poetic truth which could alone have done this, were far from him. Considerable work of a secondary kind he did, but he had something greater to say which he never said, but only gave rare hints of it and an obscured sense of the presence of its meaning.

Wordsworth, with a much higher poetic mind than Byron's, did not so entirely miss his greatest way, though he wandered much in adjacent paths and finally lost himself in the dry desert sands of the uninspired intellectual mentality. At the beginning he struck in the midst of some alloy full into his purest vein of gold. His earliest vision of his task was the right vision, and whatever may be the general truth of his philosophy of childhood in the great Ode, it seems to have been true of him. For as intellectuality grew on him, the vision failed ; the first clear intimations dimmed and finally passed leaving behind an unillumined waste of mere thought and moralising. But always, even from the beginning, it got into the way of his inspiration. Yet Wordsworth was not a wide thinker, though he could bring a considerable weight of thought to the aid of the two or three great things he felt and saw lucidly and deeply, and he was unfitted to be a critic of life of which he could only see one side with power and originality,—for the rest he belongs to his age rather than to the future and is limited in his view of religion, of society, of man by many walls of convention. But what the poet sees and feels, not what he opines, is the real substance of his poetry. Wordsworth saw Nature and he saw man near to Nature, and when he speaks of these things, he finds either his noblest or his purest and most penetrating tones. His view of them is native to his temperament and personality and at the opposite pole to Byron's. Not that which is wild, dynamic or tumultuously great in Nature, but her calm, her serenity, the soul of peace, the tranquil Infinite, the still, near, intimate voice that speaks from flower and bird, sky and star, mountain and stream, this he knew, felt and lived in as no poet before or after him has done, with a spiritual closeness and identity which is of the nature of a revelation, the first spiritual revelation of this high near kind to which English poetry had given voice. Some soul of man, too, he sees, not in revolt,—he has written unforgettable lines about liberty, but a calm and ordered liberty,—in harmony with this tranquil soul in Nature, finding in it some original simplicity and purity of his being and founding on it a life in tune with the order of an eternal law. On this perception the moralist in Wordsworth founds a rule of simple faith, truth, piety, self-control, affection, grave gladness in which the sentimental naturalism of the eighteenth century disappears into an ethical naturalism, a very different idealisation of humanity in the simplicity of its direct contact with Nature unspoiled by the artifice and corruption of a too developed society. All that Wordsworth has to say worth saying is confined to these motives and from them he draws his whole genuine thought inspiration.

But it is in the Nature strain of which he is the discoverer that he is unique, for it is then that the seer in him either speaks the revelatory thought of his spirit or gives us strains greater than thoughts, the imperishable substance of spiritual consciousness finding itself in sight and speech. At other times, especially when he fuses this Nature-strain with his thought and ethical motive, he writes sometimes poetry of the very greatest ; at others again it is of a varying worth and merit ; but too often also he passes out from his uninspired intelligence work with no stamp of endurance, much less of the true immortality. In the end the poet in him died while the man and the writer lived on ; the moralist and concentrated thinker had killed the singer, the intellect had walled up the issues of the imagination and spiritual vision. But even from the beginning there is an inequality and uncertainty which betray an incomplete fusion of the sides of his personality, and the heavy weight of intellectuality shadows over and threatens the spiritual light which it eventually extinguished. Except in a small number of pieces which rank among the greatest things in poetry, he can never long keep to the pure high poetic expression. He intellectualises his poetic statement overmuch and in fact states too much and sings too little, has a dangerous turn for a too obvious sermonising, pushes too far his reliance on the worth of his substance and is not jealously careful to give it a form of beauty. In his works of long breath there are terrible stretches of flattest prose in verse with lines of power, sometimes of fathomless depth like that wonderful

Voyaging in strange seas of thought alone,

interspersed or occurring like a lonely and splendid accident, *rari nantes in gurgite vasto**. It has been said with justice that he talks too much in verse and sings too little ; there is a deficient sense of the more subtle spirit of rhythm, a deficiency which he overcomes when moved or lifted up, but which at other times, hampers greatly his effectiveness. His theory of poetic diction, though it has a cerain truth in it, was, as he practised it, narrow and turned to unsoundness ; it betrayed him into the power of the prosaic and intellectual element in his mind. These defects grew on him as the reflective moralist and monk and the conventional citizen,—there was always in him this curious amalgam—prevailed over the seer and poet.

But still one of the seer-poets he is, a seer of the calm spirit in Nature, the poet of man's large identity with her and serene liberating communion : it is on this side that he is admirable and unique. He has other strains too of great power. His chosen form of diction, often too bare and trivial in the beginning, too heavy afterwards, helps him at his best to a language and movement of unsurpassed poetic weight and gravity charged with imaginative insight, in which his thought and his ethical sense and spiritual sight meet in a fine harmony, as in his one great Ode, in some of his sonnets, in *Ruth*, even in *Laodamia*, in lines and passages which uplift and redeem much of his less satisfying work, while when the inner light shines wholly out, it admits him to the secret of the very self-revealing voice of Nature herself speaking through the human personality in some closest intimacy with her or else uttering the greatness of an impersonal sight and truth. He has transparencies in which the spirit gets free of the life-wave, the intelligence, the coloured veils of the imagination, and poetic speech and rhythm become hints of the eternal movements and the eternal stabilities, voices of the depths, rare moments of speech direct from our hidden immortality.

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* **"Rare swimming in the vast gurge."**

III

If Wordsworth and Byron failed by an excess of the alloy of untransmuted intellect in their work, two other poets of the time, Blake and Coleridge, miss the highest greatness they might otherwise have attained by an opposite defect, by want of the gravity and enduring substance which force of thought gives to the poetical inspiration. They are, Coleridge in his scanty best work, Blake almost always, strong in sight, but are unable to command the weight and power in the utterance which arises from the thinking mind when it is illumined and able to lay hold on and express the reality behind the idea. They have the faculty of revelatory sense in a high degree, but little of the revelatory thought which should go with it ; or at least though they can suggest this sometimes with the intense force which comes from spiritual feeling, they cannot command it and constantly give it greatness and distinctness of body. And their sight is only of the middle kind ; it is not the highest things they see, but only those of a borderland or middle region. Their poetry has a strange and unique quality and charm, but it stops short of something which would have made it supreme. They are poets of the supernatural and of such spiritual truth as may be shadowed by it or penetrate through it, but not of the greatest truths of the spirit. And this supernature remains in them a thing seen indeed and objectively real, but abnormal ; but it is only when supernature becomes normal to the inner experience that it can be turned into material of the very greatest poetry.

Coleridge more than any of his great contemporaries missed his poetic crown ; he has only found and left to us three or four scattered jewels of a strange and singular beauty. The rest of his work is a failure. There is a disparateness in his gifts, an inconsequence and incoherence which prevented him from bringing them together, aiding one with the other and producing great work rich in all the elements of his genius. Intellectuality he had in abundance, a wide, rich and subtle intellect, but he squandered rather than used it in discursive metaphysics and criticism and was most at home when pouring it out in the spontaneity of conversation or rather monologue, an outlet in which the labour of giving it the firmness of an enduring form could be avoided. The poet in him never took into himself the thinker. The consequence is that very much the greater part of his poetry, though his whole production is small enough in bulk, is unconvincing in the extreme. It has at best a certain eloquence or a turn of phrase and image which has some intellectual finish but not either force or magic, or a fluidity of movement which fails to hold the ear. But there are three poems of his which are unique in English poetry, written in moments when the too active intellect was in abeyance, an occult eye of dream and vision opened to supraphysical worlds and by a singular felicity the other senses harmonised, the speech caught strange subtleties and coloured lucidities of speech and the ear the melodies of other realms. It is indeed just over the mystic border that his sight penetrates to its most interior forms, and he does not enter into these worlds as did Blake, but catches only their light and influence upon the earth life ; but it is caught with a truth and intensity which makes magical the scenes and movements of the earth life and transforms light of physical nature into light of supernature. This is to say that for the first time, except for rare intimations, the middle worlds and their beings have been seen and described with something of reality and no longer in the crude colours of vulgar tradition or in the forms of myth. The Celtic genius of second sight has begun to make its way into poetry. It is by these poems that he lives, though he has also two or three others of a more human charm and grace ; but here Coleridge shows within narrow limits a superlative power and brings in a new element and opens a new field in the realms of poetic vision.

Blake lives ordinarily far up in this middle world of which Coleridge only catches some glimpses or at most stands occasionally just over its border. His seeing teems with its images, he hears around him the echoes of its sounds and voices. He is not only a seer, but almost an inhabitant of other planes and other worlds ; or at least this second subtle sight is his normal sight. But his power of expression is not equal to his power of vision. When he would catch the very words and express the very images of these middle realms, he speaks very often things which are unintelligible symbols to any other intelligence than his own. He is unable to translate his experience to our comprehension, It is only when he casts into some echo of the language of the luminous children of those shores the songs of their childhood and their innocence, that he becomes limpid to us and sheds upon our earth some clear charm, felicity, wonder of a half divine otherwhere. Here again we have something unique, a voice of things which had not been heard before nor has it been heard since ; for the Celtic poets who sometimes give us something that is in its source akin, bring a ripe reflective knowledge and a colour of intellectuality into their speech and vision, but Blake seeks to put away from him as much as possible the intellectual mind, to see only and sing. By this effort and his singularity and absorption he stands apart solitary and remote and produces only a half effect because he has cut away the link which would help us to reach him and share his illumination.

A greater poet by nature than almost any of these, Shelley was alone of them all very nearly fitted to be a sovereign voice of the new spiritual force that was at the moment attempting to break into poetry and possess there its kingdom. He has on the one hand, one feels, been a native of the heights to which he aspires and the memory of them, not indeed quite distinct, but still enviorning his imagination with its luminous ethereality, is yet with him. If the idea of a being not of our soil fallen into the material life and still remembering his skies can be admitted as an actual fact of human birth, then Shelley was certainty a living example of one of these luminous spirits half obscured by earth ; the very stumblings of his life came from the difficulty of such a nature moving in the alien terrestrial environment in which he is not at home nor capable of accepting its muddy vesture and iron chain, attempting impatiently to realise there the law of his own being in spite of the obstruction of the physical clay. This mind and nature cannot live at ease in their dusk day and time, but escape to dwell prophetically in a future heaven and earth in which the lower life shall have accepted the law of his own celestial worlds. As a poet his intellect is suffused and his imagination is bathed with their light ; they are steeped in the brilliances of a communion with a higher law, another order of existences, another meaning behind Nature and terrestrial things. But in addition he possesses the intellectual equipment possible in his age and can speak with a subtle beauty and perfect melody the tongue of the poetic intelligence. He is a seer of spiritual realities, much more radiantly near to them than Wordsworth, has, what Coleridge had not, a poetic grasp of metaphysical truths, can see the forms and hear the voices of higher elemental spirits and natural godheads than those seen and heard by Blake, while he has a knowledge too of some fields of the same middle realm, is the singer of a greater and deeper liberty and a purer and nobler revolt than Byron, has the constant feeling of a high spiritual and intellectual beauty, not sensuous in the manner of Keats, but with a hold on the subtler beauty of sensible things which gives us not their glow of vital warmth and close material texture, but their light and life and the rarer atmosphere that environs them on some meeting line between spirit and body. He is at once seer, poet, thinker, prophet, artist. In his own day and after the strangeness of his genius made him unintelligible to the rather gross and mundane intellectual mind of the nineteenth century, those who admired him most, were seized only by the externalities of his work, its music, delicacy, diffusely lavish imaginative opulence, enthusiasm, but missed its inner significance. Now that we are growing more into the shape of his ideas and the forms of his seeing, we can get nearer to the hidden heart of his poetry. Still high pinnacled as is his flight, great as is his work and his name, there is in him too a limitation which prevents the perfect self-expression that we find only in the few supreme poets.

This was due to the condition under which the evolution of his poetry had to take place and to the early death which found him at the time when it was rounding towards the full orb of its maturity. His earlier poetry shows him striving with the difficulty of the too intellectual manner of speech from which these poets of supra-intellectual truth had to take their departure. Shelley uses language throughout as a poet ; he was incapable of falling into the too hard and outward manner of Byron or yielding to the turn towards mere intellectuality which always beset Wordsworth. The grain of his mind was too saturated with the hues of poetic vision, he had too splendid and opulent an imagination, too great a gift of flowing and yet uplifted and inspired speech for such descents, and even in his earlier immature poetry, *Queen Mab*, *Alastor*, the *Revolt of Islam*, these powers are there and sustain him, but still the first form of his diction is a high, sometimes a magnificent poetic eloquence, which sometimes enforces the effect of what he has to say, but more often loses it in a flood of diffuse and overabundant expression. It is not yet the native language of his spirit. As his power develops, the eloquence remains, but is subdued to the growig splendour of his vision and its hints and images, but the thought seems almost to disappear from the concrete grasp of the intelligence into a wonder of light and a music of marvellous sound. The *Prometheus* and *Epipsychidion* show this turn of his genius at its height; they are two of the three greatest things he has left to us on the larger scale. Here he does come near to something like the natural speech of his strange, beautiful and ethereal spirit; but the one thing that is wanting is a more ascetic force of *tapasya* economising and compressing its powers to bring in a new full and seizing expression of the thought element in his poetry, not merely opulent and eloquent or bright with the rainbow hues of imagination, but sovereign in poetic perfection and mastery. Towards this need his later style is turning, but except once in *Adonais* he does not seize on the right subject matter for his genius. Only in the lyric of which he has always the secret, —for of all English poets he has perhaps the most natural, spontaneous, sweet and unfailing gift of melody, and his emotion and lyrical cry are at once of the most delicate and the most intense, —is he frequently and constantly equal alike in his thought, feeling, imagery, music. But it is not often that he uses the pure lyrical form for his greatest sight, for what would now be called his "message." When he turns to that, he attempts always a larger and more expansive form. The greatness of *Prometheus Unbound* which remains, when all is said, his supreme effort and one of the masterpieces of poetry, arises from the combination of this larger endeavour and profounder substance with the constant use of the lyrical mould in which he most excelled, because it agreed with the most intimate turn of his temperament and subtly exalted spirit.

The spiritual truth which had possession of Shelley's mind was higher than anything opened to the vision of any of his contemporaries, and its power and reality which was the essence of his inspiration can only be grasped, when it is known and lived, by a changed and future humanity. Light, Love, Liberty are the three godheads in whose presence his pure and radiant spirit lived; but a celestial light, a celestial love, a celestial liberty. To bring them down to earth without their losing their celestial lustre and hue is his passionate endeavour, but his wings constantly buoy him upward and cannot beat strongly in an earthlier atmosphere. The effort and the unconquered difficulty are the cause of the ethereality, the want of firm earthly reality that some complain of in his poetry. There is an air of luminous mist surrounding his intellectual presentation of his meaning which shows the truths he sees as things to which the mortal eye cannot easily pierce or the life and temperament of earth rise to realise and live ; yet to bring about the union of the mortal and the immortal, the terrestrial and the celestial, is always his passion. He is himself too much at war with his age to ignore its contradictions and pass onward to the reconciliation. He has to deny God in order to affirm the Divine, and his denial brings in a note too high, discordant and shrill. He has not the symbols or the thought-forms through which he can make the spirit of light, love and freedom intimate and near to men ; he has, as in the *Prometheus*, to go for them to his imagination or to some remote luminous experience of ideal worlds and to combine these beautiful ideal images, too delicately profound in their significance, too veiled in robe upon robe of light to be distinct in limb and form, with traditional names and symbols which are converted into this other sense and fail to be perfect links because by the conversion they cease to be familiar to the mind. To bring his difficult significance home he lavishes inexhaustibly image on radiant image, line on dazzling beauty of line, the sense floats in a storm of coruscations and dissolving star-showers ; the more we look and accustom our eyes to this new kind of light, the more loveliness and light we see, but there is not that immediate seizing and taking captive of the whole intelligence which is the sign of an assured and sufficient utterance.

He is in revolt too against the law of earth, in arms against its dominations and powers, and would substitute for it by some immediate and magical change the law of heaven ; but so he fails to make the needed transition and reconciliation and his image of the thing to be remains too ideal, too fine and abstract in spite of the beauty of the poetical forms he gives it as its raiment or atmosphere. Heaven cannot descend to take possession of the gross, brute and violent earth he sees around him, therefore he carries up the delivered earth into a far and ideal heaven. Something of the same excess of another light than ours surrounds and veils his intercourse with the spirit in Nature. He sees her earthly forms in a peculiar radiance and light and through them the forms and spirits of his ideal world. He has not Wordsworth's distinctness and intimate spiritual communion with Nature as she is on earth ; the genii of the worlds of dream and sleep cluster too thickly round all that his waking eye seizes. He tries to let them in through the force of crowding images, brilliant tossings aside of the lucent curtain, *tiraskarani*, which veils them from us : but they remain half-hidden in their means of revelation. The earth-nature is seen in the light of another nature more than in its own, and that too is only half visible in the mixed luminosity, "burning through the vest that hides it." Tradition governs very largely his choice of rhythms, but wonderfully melodious as is his use or conversion of them to the mould of his spirit, one feels that he would have done better to seek more often for self-formed movements. Shelley is the bright archangel of this dawn and he becomes greater to us as the light he foresaw and lived in returns and grows, but he sings half concealed in the too dense halo of his own ethereal beauty.

As with Wordsworth and Byron, so too we find Shelley and Keats standing side by side, but with a certain antinomy. They are perhaps the two most purely poetic minds that have used the English tongue; but one sings from the skies earthwards, the other looks from the earth towards Olympus. Keats is the first entire artist in word and rhythm in English poetry,—not grandiose, classical and derived like Milton, but direct and original in his artistry, he begins a new era. His astonishing early performance leaves us wondering what might have been the masterpieces of his prime, of which even *Hyperion* and the Odes are only the unfulfilled promise. His death in the beginning of his powers is the greatest loss ever suffered by human achievement in this field. Alone of all the chief poets of his time he is in possession of a perfect or almost perfected instrument of his native temperament and genius, but he had not yet found the thing he had to say, not yet seen what he was striving to see. All the other high things that interested his great equals, had for him no interest; one god-head only he worshipped, the image of divine Beauty, and through this alone he wished to see Truth and by her to achieve spiritual delight and not so much freedom as completeness. And he saw her in three of her four forms, sensuous beauty, imaginative beauty, intellectual and ideal beauty. But it is the first only which he had entirely expressed when his thread was cut short in its beginning; the second he had carried far, but it was not yet full-orbed; towards the third and highest he was only striving, "to philosophise he dared not yet," but it was from the first the real sense and goal of his genius.

On life he had like the others—Byron alone excepted—no hold; such work as *Lamia*, *Isabella*, the *Eve of St. Agnes*, in which he followed the romantic tendency of the time, was not his own deeper self-expression; they are wonderful richly woven robes of sound and word and image curiously worked and brocaded, but they clothe nothing. The Odes, where fulfilment of imaginative beauty rises out of a higher sensuous seeking and satisfaction to an admirable sweetness, fullness, largeness and opulence and admits intimations of the ideal goddess, are almost all of them among the scanty number of the chief masterpieces in this high and deliberate lyrical form. But the real soul of Keats, his inner genius, the thing he was striving to bring out of himself is not to be altogether found even here ; it lay in that attempt which, first failing in *Endymion*, was again resumed in *Hyperion*. It was the discovery of the divine idea, Power and living norms of Beauty which by its breath of delight has created the universe, supports it and moves towards a greater perfection, inspires the harmonies of inward sight and outward form, yearns and strives towards the fullness of its own self-discovery by love and delight. Not yet in possession of his idea, he tries to find and to figure it in *Endymion* by sensuous images of a rich and dim moonlit dream with a sort of allegory or weft of symbols behind the words and thoughts, but his hand is still inexpert and fails in the execution. In *Hyperion* the idea is clearer and in bolder relief, but it is misconceived under a too intellectual, external and conventionally epic Miltonic influence, and in his second version he turns not quite happily to a renewal of the form of his first attempt. He has found a clue in thought and imagination, but not quite its realisation in the spiritual idea, has already its imaginative, sensuous, something of its intellectual suggestion, but not yet what the spirit in him is trying to reveal, its mystically intellectual, mystically sensuous, mystically imaginative vision, form and word. The intimation of it in his work, his growing endeavour to find it and the unfulfilled promise of its discovery and unique fullness of expression are the innermost Keats and by it he belongs in spirit to these prophetic, but half-foiled singers of the dawn. He lives more than any other poet in the very temple of Beauty, traverses its sculptured and frescoed courts with a mind hued and shaped to her forms and colours and prepares, but is never permitted, to enter the innermost sanctuary. The time had not yet come when these spiritual significances could be more than hinted. Therefore Keats and Shelley were taken before their powers could fully expand, Byron led far out of the path, Blake obscured in his own remoteness, Coleridge and Wordsworth drawn away to lose the poet and seer in the mere intellectual mind. All wandered round their centre of inspiration, missed something needed and stopped or were stopped short. Another age had to arrive which worshipped other and lesser godheads.

2. V. K. AYAPPAN PILLAI

[Loved, honoured and admired by successive generations of students, Prof. Ayappan Pillai enjoys a wide and well-deserved reputation as a sound scholar of English language and literature. Born in Kottayam, Travancore State, in 1897, he was educated first in his home town and then at Trivandrum and Oxford. He took the B.A. Honours degree (in English) from the University of Madras in 1918 and later secured the same degree from the University of Oxford in 1923. Both the degrees he obtained with first class distinction. Having worked for some years in the Maharajah's College, Trivandrum, he succeeded Prof. (now Sir) Samuel E. Runganadhan in the Presidency College, Madras, as Professor of English, and is still working there in the same capacity. Besides being the Chairman of the Board of English Studies of the University of Madras for several years now, he is also actively connected with some of the other universities in South India. In his writings Prof. Ayappan Pillai is as sparing as he is shy in his personal contacts. He belongs to the category of the full pitchers that rarely spill ! Those who know him intimately realise how sound is his scholarship and how mature are his literary judgments. His six lectures on " Shakespeare criticism from the beginnings to 1765 " (Blackie & Son, Ltd., London and Glasgow, 1932) were originally delivered as University Lectures in 1929. " Day after day, a crowded hall listened in tense silence,"—thus recorded a distinguished scholar and professor his impressions of Prof. Ayappan Pillai's lectures. And any one who reads the volume will not fail to be struck by the author's clear insight, critical acumen and lucid exposition. The essay with which he is represented in this anthology was first read by him before the English Association, Madras Branch, in 1938, and was published in *The Presidency College Magazine,* Madras, in the same year. It throws much fresh light on one of the perpetually interesting literary forms and reveals Prof. Ayappan Pillai's vast erudition and facility of expression.]

FABLES AND FABULISTS

The name *fable* (Lat. fabula, narrative, something spoken, Fr. fable, Germ. fabel, Ital. favola) is not so old as the form. For, the animal fable or the apologue, a narrative devised to enforce a moral lesson, a literary form now out of fashion, is a product of the childhood of the age, which, like the childhood of the individual, it has been well said, is lulled by stories. In classical Sanskrit literature the didactic fable, which like other types of stories is known by the common name *Katha*, has been traced to the pre-Guptan era, circa the second century B. C. Prof. Keith observes that early Indian thought was ready to ascribe to animals thoughts similar to those of men, and this tendency received an impetus from the growing belief in transmigration. With the rise of Buddhism "the fable was given a definite religious significance, by being employed in connection with the doctrine of transmigration to illustrate the essential virtues of Buddhism, through the identification of personages of the tales with the Buddha and others of his *entourage*."* Whatever be its exact antiquity, there can be no doubt, however, that the fables have concentrated in them a world of observation and of reflection of generations of primitive human society. The *Panchatantra* is the great Sanskrit collection: the claim that no book except the Bible has enjoyed such an extensive circulation may probably be an exaggeration. It has, however, been translated into many languages in India and outside and my own acquaintance with it is mainly from a delightful Malayalam version of it, all in verse, the work of one of the most gifted of our poets, Kunjan Nambiar. The original *Panchatantra* was a kind of *Furstenspiegal* or Mirror for Magistrates, divided into five books, dealing respectively with the Separation of Friends, the Winning of Friends, War and Peace, the Loss of one's earnings, and Hasty Action. The narrator of the *Kathas* is Vishnusarman who undertakes to teach wisdom to the ignorant sons of Amarasakti, the King of Mahilaropya. Vishnusarman starts teaching the princes the science of polity under the guise of animal stories. Each of the five books contains a "frame story" and at least one, often several, "embossed stories," that is, stories represented as being told by one character in the frame story to another. One distinction of the collection is this brilliant device of the "story frame-work," which thus springing in the East, spreads rapidly to the West and is turned to such excellent results in the Decameron and the Canterbury Tales. The longest and, in some ways, the most interesting book of the *Panchatantra* is the first in which figure Karataka and Damanaka, the two jackals, brothers themselves and courtiers of the king, Pingalaka, the lion. By the wiles of Karataka the great friendship of Pingalaka for the Ox which had strayed into the forest, is turned to hatred and the latter is killed. If the animal fables were originally devised for pure amusement, they are soon overlaid with moral purpose, and the *Panchatantra* is claimed as a *Nitisastra* and it is connected with the work now well known as *Kautilya's Arthasastra*, a political treatise, and the figure of Chanakya, a master of political strategy. The work is partly in verse and partly in prose—the moral precepts are in verse while the stories are told in prose. The tales themselves are of unusual excellence and have attained a wide celebrity. Prof. Keith says: "None can mistake the delicate sense of humour of the author; his animals charm us with the quaint propriety of the sentiments and speeches ascribed to them." Among the general favourites are: the lion and the hare who led the former to a deserved end by making him see his reflection in the well; the hare getting rid of an elephant by the clever use of the reflection of the moon in the water; the three rogues who found it so easy to trick a Brahmin; the tiny mouse turned into a maiden by a seer into whose hands it had fallen and its marriage; the hasty folly of the Brahmin who slew his faithful ichneumon; the Brahmin who indulged in dreams of the prosperity to be made out of the skilful use of the groats he had begged. Max Müller has shown that this last is the source of La Fontaine's La Laitier et le Pot au lait, Fable 10, Book VII.

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* **Keith : "Classical Sanscrit Literature."**

The *Panchatantra* or a recension of it, the *Hitopadesa*, constitutes in the literary *genre* we are considering one authentic tradition in the Middle Ages of Europe. As early as the eleventh century the work reached Europe and before 1600 it was turned into Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, German, English, Old Slavonic and Czech.

A second and no doubt a far more powerful tradition in the Middle Ages was that established by the well-known *Aesop's Fables*, dating from the first century fabulist Phaedrus. whose *Fabulae Aesopiae* in Latin verse, is the earliest collection in existence bearing the name of the Phrygian slave and fable-teller of the sixth century B.C. mentioned by Herodotus. There were several renderings of Phaedrus in Latin prose and verse in the Middle Ages one of which was Walter's Aesop used as a school book. The Fables of Caxton printed in 1484 were based on those of Steinhöwel and were in the form of brief prose apologues. The house-dog and the wolf may be taken as a pattern of the Aesopean fable, "brief, terse in expression, with not a single unnecessary word, the moral obvious and appealing to everyone, the situation frankly impossible, with a slight element of quiet humour."

What may be described as a third tradition in this literary kind is but that of the mediaeval beast epic known as Reynard the Fox. This was the most popular classic of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries in Europe, especially in France, Germany and Belgium. Carlyle in his essay on Early German Literature speaks of the fourteenth century as the summertide and highest efflorescence of fable literature. Here, as in other things, Caxton is earliest in the field : this Reynard the Fox was the earliest version in print and appeared in 1481. Reynard the Fox—Reineke Fuchs—* "a truly European performance, for some centuries a universal household possession and secular Bible, read everywhere in the palace and the hut ; the most poetical and meritorious production of our western world in that kind," (Carlyle), is a cycle of parody and satire, not infrequently steeped in humour, and is believed to be a product originally of the twelfth century.

Noble, King of Beasts, holds a solemn Court at Whitsuntide when he is deafened by complaints, loud and long, against Reineke ; among the sufferers are Henze, the cat, Lampe, the hare, Isegrim, the wolf, and many others. Chanticleer, the cock, appears with the body of one of his murdered children. Noble sends Bruin, the bear, to summon the criminal to the august presence but he returns "without his errand ; without his ears, almost without life." Reineke at last turns up, impresses by his eloquence, hints at some treasures and is received into high favour, defeats Isegrim and is made Chancellor. Later, Renart found guilty of numerous crimes, seeing the fatal noose draw near his neck, is seized with sudden repentance.

In the name of Holy Penance
I wish to take the Cross and go
God be thanked, beyond the seas.

These three traditions mingled and were all active in England which, it has been claimed, was the home of the mediaeval beast fable, and in Europe generally. The Nun's Priest's Tale of Chaucer, undoubtedly the greatest English fabulist, is itself an offshoot, through Marie de France, the author of Isopet, a French woman, who wrote in England, of the great Reynard Cycle. Of Chaucer's inimitable tale of the Cock and the Fox, the perfection of the mock-heroic, it is superfluous to speak. But both its epic proportions and the mock-heroic must be regarded as alien to the true fable.

But ye that holden this tale a folye
Taketh the moralitee, goode men

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* The title of Goethe's version in Modern German.

For Seint Paul seith that al that writen is
To oure doctrine it is y-write, ywis.
Taketh the fruyt and lat the chaf be stille.

But earlier than Chaucer there is a remarkable poem, an admirably told Tale of the Fox and the Wolf in the Well, preserved in the Bodleian MS. The narrative which extends to 295 lines of octosyllabics is the earliest offshoot in English of the Reynard Cycle. The Fox fresh from his meal over three chicken has descended into a well in a bucket to slake his thirst. His thirst quenched, he is at his wit's end how to come up from the bottom of the well when a wolf presents himself. He entices the wolf to jump into the other bucket in order to let his one rise up so that he might escape. Reynard pretends that he is in Paradise down below and at the entreaty of the tricked wolf receives the latter's confession so that he, the wolf, might go down and share the joys of heaven :—

Her is the blisse of paradise ;
Her ich man ever wil fare,
Without pine, withouten care,
Here is mete, here is drinke
Here is bliss withouten swinke*
Here nis hunger never mo
Ne non other kunnes† wo

When the wolf entering the bucket goes down to the bottom he finds nothing but "colde water." The Friar coming to draw water at dawn finds the bucket heavy.

And the wolf was hevi-inoow
He gradde‡ "The devel is in the pütte."

The first considerable and, barring Chaucer, the greatest English fabulist is Henryson, school master of Dunfermline, one of Chaucer's northern followers. Henryson's fables number thirteen ; seven are in the regular Aesopian tradition, the others are derived partly from Indian fables or connected with the Reynard Cycle. Henryson's fables are narrative poems, of considerable length ; they are of the discursive, not of the terse variety, with the 'moralitas' extending to several stanzas separately attached to each. The claim which their latest editor, Mr. Harvey Wood, makes for them is not exaggerated : "Not only in tales for which no original is known, but in well worn pieces like the Town Mouse and the Country Mouse, the story is told as though it had never been told before, with a wealth of personal observation, simple pathos, and lively humour. The dead bones are made to live." In the prologue to the Lion and the Mouse,

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* Labour. † Any kind of. ‡ Cried out.

Aesop himself appears to him in the inevitable vision, dressed in a milk-white gown and a roll of paper in hand, whom the poet addresses—

> O Maister Esope, poet Lauriate
> God wot, ye are ful deer welcome to me
> Ar ye not he that all thir fables wrote
> Quhilk in effect, suppois they faynit be,
> Are full of prudence and moralitee ?

Delightful is the tale of the fox, who overtaken by a sense of repentance for his crimes, makes his confession to Freir Wolf:

> Bot, Father, byde still here upon the bent,
> I you beseik, and hear me to declare
> My conscience that pricks me so sore.

The wolf after shriving him orders him to abjure flesh. The fox steals a kid

> And in the water outher twice or thrice
> He ducked him, and to him can he sayne ;
> "Ga dowdn, Schir kid, cum up Schir Salmond agane."

The satiric bent of Henryson is fully revealed in the Trial of the sheep in the court presided over by the wolf, in which the proceedings of the ecclesiastical court are under fire. Admirable is the story of the wolf, the fox and the cadger in which the fox shamming dead succeeds in dropping the fish out of the cadger's cart, persuades the wolf to sham dead also, and gets him thrashed by the cadger.

Besides these, those of Gay, the eighteenth century fabulist, are cheap and merely facile, though exceedingly popular in their time, a popularity enhanced, it would appear, by some admirable woodcuts with which the original editions were provided. Time has been just in her sifting ; the fable of the Hare with many Friends, which remains a general favourite, alone deserves to be remembered. Dr. Johnson gave the prime reason for this sinking of his reputation : " As a poet he cannot be rated very high. He was, as I once heard a female critic remark, of a lower order. He had not in any degree, the *mens divinior*, the dignity of genius."

But the glories of this literary kind are not to be sought in the ample fields of English Letters. La Fontaine in French is the prince of fabulists and Krylov, the Russian, a good second. It is interesting to note that this French Homer, for so he has been seriously described, was a contemporary of the English Homer, Milton, for he was born in 1621 and died in 1695. He is one of the great masters of the *Grand Siecle*, the age of Louis XIV, and was a friend of Corneille, Moliere, Racine, Boileau and Madame de la Sevigne. Though a scholar learned in the classics, he never lost the simplicity and freshness that have made his Fables a primer for many generations of French children. His life shows how throughout he retained something of the child about him. A great French poet with a *curiosa felicitas* of expression in respect of which and his general moral outlook he has often been compared with Horace, La Fontaine made the traditional beast fable the instrument of his subtle and suggestive art. His fables are in twelve books and the twelfth book was published in 1694. In the dedication to the Dauphin he says that he sings of heroes whose father is Aesop; a troop whose story, though fabulous, holds truths which serve as lessons. "Every one talks in my work—even the little fishes. I put myself among animals in order to instruct men." Elsewhere in the prologue to Le Bûcheron et Mercure,* he speaks of his work as

Une ample comèdie à cent actes divers†
Et dont la Scène est l'univers.

La Fontaine's work, on whose universality he prides himself most, is derivative, not original. All the fables are based on either Aesop, or Phaedrus or one of the many other fabulists. His claim to originality, which is indefeasible, is founded on the workmanship of these finished masterpieces. La Fontaine's fables are not merely or mainly narratives—indeed, there is far more of dialogue, action and drama in them than of narrative.

The singular vividness and truth with which he conceives the beings which people his world, the dramatic propriety of the dialogue he puts into their mouth and the delightful humour of these tales combine to make them a perpetual delight. The moral of the fable was the vital element in the early ages ; indeed La Fontaine himself calls it the soul of the fable, but "from an apologue tending to an express moral he converted the fable into a *conte* in which narrative, description, observation, satire, and dialogue have an independent value, and the moral is little more than an accident." La Cigale et la Fourmi, the first fable of the first Book, has been much criticised for its alleged failure to point a proper moral but the work has a "delicious crispness of execution" and the concluding lines are characteristic :—

Vous Chantiez ! J'en suis fort aise.
Eh bien ! dansez maintenant.

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* Mercury and the Wood-cutter.

† A large comedy in a hundred different acts, the scene of which is the whole Universe.

The Grasshopper and the Ant

A Grasshopper the summer long
Sang her song,
And found herself when winter came
Without a morsel to her name.
Not one scrap of worm or fly
Had the careless thing put by !
So she took her tale of want
To her neighbour Mistress Ant,
Begging just a grain or two
Wherewithal to carry through
Till the Spring came round next year.
'I'll repay you, never fear,
Honest insect, ere the fall,[*]
Interest and principal.'
One fault from which the Ant is free
Is making loans too readily.
'Tell me how you spent the summer.'
'Night and day, to every comer,
Please you, ma'am, I sang my ditty.'
'Singing, were you ? Very pretty !
Now's your chance,
Mistress Grasshopper, to dance '[†]

Though indolent and careless in wordly affairs, La Fontaine was a supreme craftsman in his poetry. He is a great metrist and the cunning with which he manages the long and the short lines and his mastery of rhyme have evoked the just admiration of every student. Anatole France devotes one of his essays to La Fontaine's love of words and his careful choice of them—words which when not understood properly, says France, " it often happens that men cut each other's throat." The fables are, by their very nature, short poems, an advantage, for says St. Beuve, " In France great poetical conceptions soon fatigue us ; they pass the bounds of your attention which is so quickly baffled and so inclined to mockery ; of imagination and of fertility which occupies very little time ; that is where La Fontaine excels."

It is perhaps a mistake to take the moral of these fables too seriously. La Fontaine enjoys his animals ; he has a poetical sympathy with them and through them he holds the mirror to the brilliant age in which he lived. The 32 lines of Le Chêne et Le Roseau and the longer Two Pigeons have been described as the " consummation of a literary kind."

The Oak and the Reed

The Oak said to the Reed one day,
'The wrong that Nature does you is extreme ;

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[*] Fr l'out the harvest

[†] The Fables of La Fontaine, translated by Edward Marsh, Heinemann.

Even a wren for you is load enow.
The lightest wind that on its random way
Wrinkles the surface of the stream
Can force your head to stoop and sway ;
While like an Apennine my lofty brow
Not only challenges the sun's fierce beam
But braves the whirlwind. What is Aquilo
To you, to me seems Zephyr. Even so,
Did you but dwell beneath the shade
Wherewith my green circumference
Of sheltering foliage overcasts the glade,
Your misery were less intense—
I could afford you some defence ;
But you are born beyond my friendly screen,
On the moist borders of the wind's demesne :
Sure, Nature treats you in a churlish fashion.'
'I thank you,' said the Reed, 'for your compassion,
Which speaks you kind : but make no more ado.
I from the winds have less to fear than you.
I bend, and break not. You, until this hour,
Have stood unbowed beneath their awful power ;
But let us wait th' event.' He scarce had said,
When from th' horizon's verge in fury sped
The most tremendous offspring that the North
Had ever from her icy womb sent forth.
The Tree held fast : the Reed bent low : at length,
The Wind put out his utmost strength.
And with long strain tore from the earth
Him who had neighboured heaven with his head
And set his feet among the shadowy dead.

Among other perfect things are Le Lion et le Moucheron, the lion and the gnat ; Le Mort et le Bûcheron, Death and the wood-cutter, which is strictly not an animal fable at all, but which contains some of the most pathetic lines in La Fontaine :—

Point de pain quelquefois, et jamais de repos :
Sa femme, ses enfans, les soldats, les impôts,
Le créancier, et la corvée,
Lui font d'un malheureux la peinture achevee[*]

and Les Animaux malade de la peste. Madame de Sevigne's remark has often been quoted : "La Fontaine's Fables are like a basket of strawberries ; you begin by taking out the largest and best, but little by little you eat first the one, then another until at last the basket is empty."

Krylov (1768-1844) started as an imitator of La Fontaine but soon became master of a unique satiric expression. Pushkin, who is regarded as the Shakespeare of Russia, describes him as le plus national et le plus populaire de nos poetes.* Krylov shares with La Fontaine the power of evoking a whole picture in a terse phrase. He is a more biting satirist than La Fontaine but he is none the less a poet. Maurice Baring thus translates the opening of Two Pigeons, imitated from La Fontaine—

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[*] Often no bread, never an hour of rest :
His wife, his children, soldiers foraging
Forced labour, debt, the taxes for the King—
The finished picture of a life unblest !

Two pigeons lived like sons born of one mother,
Neither would eat nor drink without the other,
Where you see one, the other is surely near,
And every joy they halved and every tear.
They heeded not at all how time flew by
Sadness they knew, but not satiety

and says that there are no six lines more tender, musical, wistful and subtly poetical in the whole Russian literature. One of his triumphs is the Ass and the Nightingale ; and the Fortune and the Beggar is another. In the Ass and the Nightingale the music of the bird in this described :—

"On this the nightingale began to show her art ; she whistled in countless ways ; sobbed sustained notes ; passed from one song to another ; at one time let her voice die away, and echoed in distant murmur of the reed ; at another time poured through the wood a shower of tiny notes. There was no one who did not listen to the song ; the breezes died away, the birds were hushed, the cattle lay down on the grass ; scarcely breathing, the shepherd revelled in it, and only now and then as he listened did he smile on the shepherdess."

Lessing's Fables represent a reaction. His whole literary life was something of a crusade against the dominance of French literary conventions in Germany and he opposes not so much La Fontaine for whom he has admiration but his imitators. Lessing has a philosophical theory about the fables. In his Abhandlungen über die Fabel (Essays on the fable) "the key-note of which is a return to Aesop, as Lessing conceived him,"† he has a dialogue with die Fabelnde Muse, the muse of the Fable. "Pupil, wherefore this thankless trouble ? Truth uses the charm and grace of the fable ; but wherefore does the fable use the grace of harmony ? Wilt thou try to season spice ?" Accordingly his fables in two books are in prose and their aim is exclusively didactic, though some of them have the truth and suggestive quality of poetry without its form. The fable of Zeus and the horse is a capital example of his manner.

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* The most national and the most popular of our poets

† Lessing by H. B. Gurland, 1988

Of course the fable will not be claimed as one of the great forms of the literature of the world. Its universality and primitiveness are unquestioned ; the fabulist, especially in modern times, is essentially a satirist " whose aim it is sometimes to convey pregnant sense, keen mockery or scathing criticism in a veiled manner, sometimes merely to laugh at human foibles or, to express wisdom in the form of wit, yet whose aim it is always to amuse." (Maurice Baring.) Lessing questioned if it is a poetic form at all. The literary elements in it, narrative, didacticism and satire are not exactly those which are conducive to the highest poetry, and the representation of the depth of emotion or of passion, the keen imaginative analysis of human character are foreign to it. The form of it is somewhat arid and it is only in a few masters that it is raised to the level of high art. It is poetry that has a palpable design upon us, not great and unobtrusive ; but the best things in it have the permanence and universality of a classic that appeals to all ages and conditions of men. The clearness and precision which we associate with it we best see in La Fontaine and here the proverbial excellence of his medium helped him.

3. M. M. BHATTACHERJEE

[Such solid work in literary criticism as has been done by this illustrious son of Bengal cannot but be the cynosure of colleagues in the field ! The list of some of his important publications (included in the bibliography at the end of this volume) shows the surprising variety of subjects he has worked on. No wonder his work has received the attention and admiration of such eminent scholars like Emilé Legouis, Mario Praz, Oliver Elton, C. J. Sisson, G. Bullough, C. H. Herford and B. E. C. Davis. Born in the District of Mymensing in East Bengal in 1892, he spent his boyhood and school life in North Bengal. All the examinations he sat for (Matric, Inter, B.A., M.A., and B. L.)—he passed in the First Division—securing many medals, prizes and scholarships. In 1918 he was awarded the Premchand Roychand Research Scholarship for his thesis on Edmud Spenser. His thesis on " Platonic Ideas in Spenser " was approved for the Ph.D. degree of the University of Calcutta in 1932. Afterwards, securing the Ghosh Travelling Fellowship of the same University, he visited Europe in 1936 and did research on the subject of " Courtesy in Shakespeare " in the British Museum and in the Libraries of the University College of London, the University of Paris and the University of Rome.

Mr. Mohini Mohan Bhattacherjee started his professional career in 1914 at the Scottish Churches College, Calcutta. From 1917 to 1940 he worked as University Lecturer in English and, for some years, also as Professor of Law in the University Law College. .Since 1941 he has been the Head of the Department of English in the University of Calcutta. He is also actively associated with the Benares, Dacca, Nagpur and the Punjab Universities. What is remarkable about Dr. Bhattacherjee is the fact that he has not allowed his professional routine to stifle his literary pursuits. A perpetual student, he is a hard worker and prolific writer. His work on Spenser has been acclaimed as a "remarkable contribution to the higher study of a great English poet," and his *Courtesy in Shakespeare* is regarded as " one more proof of the brilliant proficiency of the school of Indian critics in the domain of English literature." Prof. Bhattacherjee's work is an example of honest scholarship. Be it a short paper or a lengthy treatise, he takes care to document it well, to plan it well and to write it well. He masters his material thoroughly, shows discrimination in the use of it, and performs his task usefully and with lucidity. The essay included here was originally delivered as an Extension Lecture at the Benares Hindu University in November 1943 and was published in the Journal of that University.]

ECLECTICISM IN EDMUND SPENSER

Matthew Arnold complained against Victorian England's insular spirit and lack of curiosity. Self-complacency was, according to him, a most prominent defect of the British to whom he imputed as its consequence narowness of outlook and of intellectual sympathy. He tried to correct this defect by drawing their attention to continental culture which was international and to which France, Germany and other countries so largely contributed. " What does he know of England who only England knows ?"—was the query of one Englishman. Arnold expresses a similar idea in his somewhat irreverent remark: " He who knows the Bible only, does not know the Bible even." His charge against Victorian England, whether justifiable or not, could not be levelled against Elizabethan England.

In the domain of thought Elizabethan England was a copious borrower. The sources of its obligation were many, and the obligation was indiscriminate. Love of classical culture was derived from continental centres of learning visited by Colet, Grocyn and other scholars, Neo-Platonism with its elaborations was borrowed from Italy, and Aristotelian ideas infiltrated through European peripatetic commentaries on the *Ethics* like *Magna Moralia.* Sonneteering was learnt from Petrarch and La Pléiade School of France, Christian mysticism from Dante and the new system of Astronomy from Copernicus. Protestantism was the gift of the French theologian Calvin and the German reformer Luther, the genius of Catholicism, with its delicate symbolism, of mediaeval churchmen and Aquinas, chivalry and romance of France and Spain and statecraft of the Italian diplomat Machiavelli. Elizabethan translations, with their vast range, prove England's receptivity and avidity for fresh idea and new information. Renderings from Spanish and Italian—of fiction, discourse, drama and history—were copious and very popular. Translations from French and German, though smaller in quantity, were yet numerous. Fresh ideas can be gathered as much from travels, as from study and it was not for nothing that continental travel was recommended to the Elizabethan youth. They not only imbibed ideas and gathered information for themselves, but also became a source of inspiration to their countrymen. So keen was England's hankering for borrowed knowledge that it has been suggested that the Elizabethans did not originate any new idea, but merely utilised and pieced together foreign thoughts. (Even the discoveries for which the age was famous, were confined to the physical world, and they were not too many.) The Elizabethan Age has accordingly been called eclectic. It consumed but did not produce.

Eclecticism is almost the opposite of creation. Information and scholarship, on which it is based, are essentially different from profound synthesis and fresh orientation. Eclecticism does not suggest a new order of things. It is to a certain extent the mark of the practical man, not of the deep thinker, of business-like spirit of compromise not of bold outlook. The deliverer of a novel message, the propounder of an original idea or the preacher of a fresh gospel are never eclectics. The history of human thought furnishes examples of eclecticism which have been barren of original output and productive of mere wordy disputation. It always tends to spring up after a period of vigorous constructive speculation, especially in the later stages of a controversy between thinkers of pre-eminent abilities. Their respective followers and, more specially, cultured lay men, 'lacking the capacity for original work, seeking the solution in some kind of compromise, and possibly failing to grasp the essentials of the controversy, take refuge in a combination of those elements in the opposing systems which seem to afford a sound practical theory.' These combinations have been as illogical as facile, and eclecticism has generally acquired a somewhat contemptuous significance. At the same time, "the essence of eclecticism is the refusal to follow blindly one set of formulae and conventions coupled with a determination to recognise and select from all sources those elements which though not good and true in the abstract are in practical affairs most useful *ad hoc*." In the last stage of Greek philosophy thinkers chose their doctrines from Aristotle, Plato, the Pythagoreans, the Stoics, old Greek mythology, Jewish and other oriental systems. In the second century B.C., a remarkable tendency to eclecticism manifested itself in Rome. In neither case was any real contribution made to the progress of human culture.

Elizabethan eclecticism was reflected in Spenser's work more than in that of any of his contemporaries. The reason is to be found in his varied intellectual culture which began at Cambridge and was pursued throughout his life. With the exception of Milton and possibly Gray, Spenser, it is said, was the most learned English poet. Side by side with versatile scholarship there was his chequered career which had an important effect on Spenser's work.

After leaving the University and seeking his fortune in vain in literary work, Spenser 'turned his hopes of preferment for a time towards the church' and became secretary to the Bishop of Rochester. He was now writing the *Shepheards Calender* which reflected the quasi-socialistic doctrines he had learnt at Cambridge. Spenser railed against the humiliating methods by which a benefice or curacy could be obtained and "denounced the enormity of admitting slothful unlettered persons into the clergy, and also the encroachments of lords and ministers on the possessions and privileges of the church." Soon Spenser realised that learned scholars like him had no prospects in the church, and turned in disgust to the courtier's life. He became acquainted with Sidney and his literary and courtly friends, was received into the household of Sidney's uncle, the Earl of Leicester, and was introduced to the Queen. His first year in the service of Lord Leicester was happy. He became a member of Sidney's Areopagus and was to start for France on Leicester's business. Prospects of preferment now looked brighter. But he soon found out that the real courtier was very different from the product of Castiglione's imagination. An atmosphere of fawning flattery and vice was uncongenial to a man of culture like Spenser, and he left for Ireland as private secretary to Lord Grey de Wilton, the Lord-Lieutenant. Exile thus secured for him a position in which he had not to flatter and fawn. Though he rose by degrees to a high position as landowner in Munster, his experience of the "Salvage nation" was by no means happy. He saw treachery, intrigue, discontent on the part of the Irish and Jesuit emissaries, and violence and ruthlessness on the part of the English rulers, especially of his own chief. Desmond's rebellion and its suppression, turbulent savagery followed by terrible retribution and indiscriminate execution under a lawless law, left an undying impression on the young poet. Though Spenser did not approve of the British policy in Ireland, he supported fully Lord Grey's activities and looked upon the Irish as dangerous criminals and traitors deserving the severest punishment. Besides, he saw in Ireland lonely regions, dense, trackless forests, gloomy glades and steep hills which were to suggest the scenes of adventure in his immortal poem later on. The exile was interrupted and its inherent gloom temporarily relieved when, after ten years, he arrived at the royal court under the patronage of Sir Walter Raleigh and basked for a few months in the sunshine of the Queen's favour. Surrounded by brilliant pageantry and dazzled by the splendour of the 'royal state,' Spenser imagined that fortune had at last smiled on him. The Queen, the lords and the ladies admired the rising poet and showered their praises on him. But his eyes were soon opened to the seamy side of the royal court, to its intrigues, jealousies and moral turpitude. Neglect of friends, indifference of patrons and perfidy of rival poets galled his spirit, and his panegyric of the court in the *Faerie Queene* turned into satire in *Mother Hubbeard's Tale*, *Colin Clouts Come Home Again* and *Muiopotmos*. Returning to Ireland as a sadder and wiser man, he settled there, married and found that bliss which he had vainly hoped to enjoy in the realistion of his early ambitions at the royal court. Friend, lover dependant, courtier, official supporting a ruthless policy against rebels, Spenser's experience of life was thus as varied as his knowledge and scholarship.

This parallelism was responsible for the poet's interest in a curious combination of diverse and heterogenous matters, e.g., ancient philosophy and contemporary politics, the full-blooded life of the Renaissance and ecclesiastical corruption, the gorgeous rituals of the catholic church and Elizabethan adventures, chivalric romance and simony, classical mythology and Anabaptist theories, Christian charity and ruthless Irish policy, Platonic beauty and Jesuit intrigue. Each had captivated the imagination of Spenser, had inspired his poetry and had been deliberately woven into the structure of his allegories. It would be difficult to spot out any one of these as his special favourite. Such a remark could not be made with reference to any other writer. None or very few are equally attracted by so many dissimilar themes at the same time. Almost every one has a predominant interest to which his other interests are distinctly subordinate and to which sometimes they are deliberately sacrificed, though some may have only a single interest. Milton loves moral sublimity, while love of liberty which is chiefly the theme of his prose work, is subordinate to this. Shelley is predominantly a lover of beauty, though he sings of liberty as well. Scott's main interest centres round the variegated Middle Ages—their glamour, heroism and their splash of colour. Sensuous beauty is the special province of Keats and silent communion with the spirit of Nature is the message of Wordsworth's poetry. Undoubtedly Shakespeare had no preferences, but this furnishes no point of comparison between him and Spenser ; for though his knowledge was vast and his experiences manifold, they did not all equally dominate over his imagination. He indeed casts his glance at Mediaeval Europe, the Roman world, Renaissance Italy, etc. and studies man's mind in its various aspects— passion, ambition, jealousy, etc. But none wholly engrosses his attention, or holds him in thrall. His knowledge and experience, varied as they were, were fused into a separate amalgam—were sublimated and transformed, beyond recognition, into the new world he built up and fresh values he created. Herein lies his originality. Spenser's scholarship and experiences retained an unshakable hold on his memory, and directly inspired him. He could not forget them or free himself from their influence. They seem to have been reproduced in his work exactly as he had acquired them. Spenser was really lacking in that white heat of imagination that sublimates varied impressions into an altogether new order and suffuses it with a new light, a "light that never was on sea or land."

Spenser has often been called a child of the Renaissance, and his love of classical culture, Greek mythology and Platonism are adduced as evidence. Born in an epoch when the revival of classical studies was in full swing, Spenser took in large draughts of Greek literature and Greek thought. But he really flourished at the junction of two eras, and the culture of the middle ages survived as an active force for centuries even after the Revival had begun. Its charm still attracts converts, and Spenser felt it and imbibed its spirit to the fullest extent. As an eminent critic pertinently observes—"He was a man of the Renaissance, but he was in the main a poet of the olden time. He lived in the reign of Queen Elizabeth but his genius lived, even more decisively than that of Chaucer, in the days of Queen Philippa." Absolutely unlike that of the Renaissance was Spenser's idea of woman. In it womanhood was not condemned to have "her portion either in the torrid zone or the arctic zone of human character amid the burning sands roamed over by ravening passions, or in the flowerless region of a frigid scientific intelligence. It bloomed in the temperate region of serene affections lighted by the sun of Christian faith, and freshened by the airs of human sympathy." Reference may be made to Una who, forlorn and veiled, never utters a word of protest against desertion by her beloved* and to Amoret sitting in the lap of Womanhood in the Temple of Venus. On the steps of Womanhood's throne are placed "goodly shamefastness" and "cheerfulness," "sober Modestie" and "Comely Curtesie" and, not far off, "soft silence" and "Submiss obedience." "This is not the Renaissance, it is the mediaeval time. St. Bernard and the Crusaders lived on in

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* The purity of Una, unlike that of Belphoebe or Britomort, has culminated in sancitity, and is symbolised by that veil on the rare removal of which her face sends forth a divine radience. It is this conception of character, at once Christian and womanly, which belongs to the earlier Italian poetry.

Spenser's true poetry." Spenser took kindly to the moral virtues of chivalry as much as to Renaissance courtesy. In form the *Faerie Queene* is a romance of mediaeval chivalry, and its heroes are typical knights endowed with virtues enjoined upon by the chivalric code, e.g., courage, good faith, liberality, sense of honour, respect for women and piety, though, at the same time, they are also the products of the Renaissance,—courtiers corresponding to modern gentlemen possessing charm of personality, humour, eloquence, knowledge of poetry, painting, etc., grace and what has been called *sprezzatura.* Aubrey de Vere remarks that Spenser "stood between those ages in which knightly deeds had shared with spiritual contemplation the reverence of mankind, and that later age in which activities yet more intense, but less nobly balanced, addressed themselves to polemical controversies, to the discovery and the ruthless subjugation of races found and discovered but to be degraded."

Spenser's religious sympathies, too, were not exclusive. There were political objections against Catholicism in Elizabethan England, but apart from its active programme and its gross superstitions, it commanded Spenser's unstinted admiration. The House of Holiness in Canto X of Book I of the *Faerie Queene* embodies the genius of Catholicism in an unmistakable manner. The procession of the Seven Deadly Sins in Canto IV of Book I shows further Spenser's obligation to Catholic theology. His homage to Protestantism—its simple worship and moral ardour—is noticeable in Canto VIII (Book I), in the destruction of Acrasia's Bower and elsewhere. That this homage and admiration were divided in other spheres, too, can be aptly illustrated by reference to his allegories. These are capable of manifold interpretations. Una in Book I of the *Faerie Queene* represents Gospel Truth, Platonic Reality and Reformed Protestant church. Her marriage with Redcrosse symbolises the merger of the human soul in God as taught by Neo-Platonic Philosophy, the establishment of the Reformed Protestant faith as the state religion in England and the triumph of the Gospel as the guide of man. Holiness is at the same time the Aristotelian magnanimity, Platonic justice and Calvinistic sanctity. In Book II Medina is believed to be the Aristotelian mean of Gentleness, while Elissa and Hudibras represent one extreme and Perissa and Sans Loi the other. Guyon stands for the Aristotelian mean of Temperance and Pyrochles and Cymochles for its two extremes. But a Platonic interpretation is also apt, and, according to it, Pyrochles, Cymochles and Guyon symbolise the tripartite division of the human soul into passion, concupiscence and reason which are also figured forth in Elissa, Perissa and Medina on the one hand and Hudibras, Sans Lôi and Medina on the other. Redcrosse's ascent on the Mount of Contemplation means meditation on the next world advocated by Calvin as a fitting sequel to active life devoted to work of charity ; it also means strenuous intellectual culture, as distinct from sense-knowledge, involving a training in dialectic. The brilliant city visible to Redcrosse from the top of the Mount of Contemplation* may stand for Heavenly Jerusalem as painted in the Book of Revelation ; it has also been interpreted as Supreme Beauty or the vast sea of Beauty, the last rung of the ladder of ascent in the Symposium. Of the four hymns, the first two are devoted to the Platonic conceptions of love and beauty current during the Renaissance. Spenser soon regrets his imagined folly, vanity, carnal proclivities as manifested in these compositions of "the greener times of my youth," recants and wants to withdraw them from circulation, but thinks better and as a sort of penance writes two more hymns on Divine love and Christian mysticism, in which Christ's holy life and its teachings are introduced.

"A short poem may have the bright perfection of a flower, an epic the stately mass of a tree that combines the variety of its branches with the unity of the stem : but a romance of this intricate character is neither the flower nor the tree,—it is a labyrinth of underwood not easily pierced." This charge against the *Faerie Queene* relating to defect of construction is unanswerable. Apart from the lack of design which characterizes the poem as a whole, each of its separate episodes is faulty in construction and almost each is inconclusive.† Each was originally intended to symbolise an idea or to illustrate a moral truth. When this object has been partly fulfilled, and the episode has made some progress, the poet bethinks himself of an historical event or, it may be, another rival or allied ethical conception or philosophical principle which also claimed his attention, and is tempted to allegorise this as well. When this is done, the significance changes, and the thread of the first narrative is snapped, or Spenser diverts the story into a new and quite unexpected channel. The impression produced on the mind of the reader is one of bewildered amazement, and he wonders how the story might end and what the author might mean. When the story has been made to move along a new groove, and to bear a new meaning, some of the old characters would re-appear in their new roles and would be responsible for an anomaly of situation and significance. The tale of the twin sisters Belphoebe and Amoret is one of the loveliest, deepest and most original of legends, yet for most readers, its beauty and even its meaning are drowned in interruptions that perplex it.

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* The canto describing this it has been said, "is one in which Plato, could he have returned to earth would have found the realisation of his loftiest dreams, in which St. Thomas Aquinas would have discovered no fault, and in which St. Augustine would have rejoiced"

† The incompleteness of Spenser's stories as contrasted with Chaucer's, for example, which spoils the allegians allegories also service to illustrate the poet's divided and sympathy. This conclusion may be supported by reference to the interweaving of the tales, necessitating the reappearance of the same knights and ladies in many of them.

Sometimes anomalies and anachronisms of a glaring kind issue out of Spenser's varied scholarship and intellectual sympathy. The Palace of Mercilla in the Legend of Justice is magnificently described as the Temple of Justice. Mercilla sits on the throne as the goddess who holds the scales of justice even in this lower world. " Nothing can be subtler than the symbolism, more splendid than the imagery, more skilful than the mode in which the solemn process is carried on before the high tribunal. The warder at the gate is Awe, and the Marshal in the Hall is Order. The cloth of gold which hangs like a cloud above the head of the goddess is held by angels and the symbolism is continued by placing at the foot of the throne Dice, Eunomie, Eirene, and Reverence. The times are antique, possibly those of the Round Table. But the legend comes to an abrupt end, for Spenser's mind is suddenly directed towards the political events which convulsed England. Mary (Duessa) Queen of Scotland, comes to take her trial before the daughter of Anne Boleyn whom Mercilla now comes to represent, for immorality, treason, murder and transgression of the law of nations. Elizabeth's reluctance to pronounce sentence against the accused is made manifest, and this may also be construed as England's surviving reverence for the Holy See. Soon after, England's victories against Spain in the Low countries are celebrated as a marvellous achievement of Prince Arthur. The confusion grievously detracts from the poetic effect.

Spenser is a philosophic poet and is often called a philosopher. But he has hardly any philosophy of his own. Wordsworth has a consistent view of nature and man. Tennyson and Browning have their special ways of grappling with moral and religious problems. Lucretius has propounded a theory of creation which has won for him the rank of a philosophic poet. Spenser was acquainted with systems like Hesiod's, Lucretius's, Bruno's and Plato's and drew upon them all at leisure. He was not troubled with their inconsistencies, if any, and was not interested in reconciling them. He does not appear to have had his preferences, though he referred to Plato oftener than to others. The theologies of Calvin, of Luther, of Aquinas equally interested him, and he did not choose any one as his special favourite. Aristotle's ethical system, the manuals of conduct of Renaissance Italy, Cicero's work on friendship had the same attraction for him. But he had no exclusive and definite philosophical, theological or ethical ideal.

It has been remarked that Spenser's mind was " a whole and not merely a collection of faculties or parts " often in inferior minds disproportioned to that whole. This is true in one sense. All his faculties worked harmoniously, and at his best no one could say which of them predominated. The passages characterized in the highest degree by descriptive power, are characterized no less by loveliness, suggestiveness, moral wisdom and commonly by spiritual aspiration." But the statement is untrue in another sense. With all his versatile intellect and scholarship which were responsible for his varied interests, he had no distinctive angle of vision or outlook on men and things. His mind did not discover any link amongst his experiences, and it is these that kindled his poetic instinct almost at random. His images appear in quick succession and in a phantasmagoric procession, and go through kaleidoscopic changes. Every separate image holds the stage for a short while and disappears quickly to make room for the next. It seems as if the poet wanted to produce temporary magical effects through a stream of impressions without conveying any consistent or comprehensive message.

It is the same whether the poet narrates incidents or describes scenes ; quiet landscapes are as flitting as fights and duels, and movement and stautesque pose alternately characterise most of his imageries. Spenser often seems to take for his models characters in dumb-shows that pass before us one by one, making symbolic gestures and assuming expressions typifying the attractions they are meant to represent.

The procession of Queen Lucifera and the Seven Deadly Sins is an apt illustration. The March of the seasons and months in Book VII of the *Faerie Queene* fills 20 stanzas. First come the four seasons, then each of the twelve months, next Day and Night, then the Hours, and last Life and Death. The story element is slight and the significance meagre in both. These are possibly extreme cases ; but reference may be made to the succession of incidents in Cantos iv and vi of Book I viz., the fight between Sans Loi and Archimago, Una's rescue by the satyrs and again the fight between Satyrane and Sans Loi which remains inconclusive.

If Spenser was not the child of the Renaissance, he was neither the product of the Middle Ages. Hence he could not, suggests Aubrey de Vere, write the romantic poem of the middle ages, as Dante wrote their epic (or mystical poem). His heart was indeed devoted to the tradition of the Middle Ages, though his intellect inclined to Hellenic culture. The latter, along with the new discoveries, political changes and intellectual controversies of the 16th century, had undoubtedly an awakening effect on Spenser's genius. But they also drew that genius aside from what would have been its natural sphere. Had Spenser been a mediaeval poet, he would have given us on a large scale and fitly combined such illustration of things spiritual, seen from the poetic point of view, as Chaucer's enchanting "Legend of St. Cecilia" has given us in a fragmentary form. In the early chronicles he would also have found large materials, for even the minuter events of the middle ages must have then retained a significance lost for us. Still more full of meaning must the chivalric romances have then been. He would have selected and combined their treasures, and become their great poetic representative, as Homer, according to one of the Homeric theories, was the representative of numberless bards whose minstrelsies had delighted the youth of Greece. Spenser would thus, too, have found a far ampler field for that unconscious symbolism which belongs to high poetry, and especially to his, and he would not have been driven upon those artificial allegories which chill many a page of his verse." "It was for the human side of a great mediaeval theme that Spenser's especial characteristics would have pre-eminently qualified him, as it was the supernatural side that challenged most of the genius of Dante. He had special gifts for illustrating the offices and relations of human life."

Spenser was thus inspired not by one ideal but by more ideals than one. Sometimes these were in direct opposition. Sense and reason, Paganism and Christianity, life of strenuous activity and of intellectual culture, the bold, fiery warrior and the quiet ascetic, the courtier and the scholar, the brilliant pageantry of the English capital and the silence of the trackless forests in Ireland, equally inspired him. These produce an indelible impression of discord. To examine the conflict between the moral and carnal elements in Spenser's poetry. In the *Shepheards Calender* religion fills almost as much space as love. *The Ruines of Rome, Visions of the Worlds Vanitie, Bellayes Visions,* *The Ruines of Time* seek to turn man's mind from worldly vanity to eternal reality, and are full of denunciations of Sin. The object of the *Faerie Queene*, as the Letter to Raleigh mentions, is to "fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline." Redcrosse, the Christian knight is swathed in the armour of St. Paul, with the shield of faith, breast-plate of righteousness, etc. Sir Guyon, the emblem of Temperance, scrupulously sets his face against temptation in all its forms. Yet Spenser's choicest art is lavished on depicting the Bower of Bliss, its voluptuous beauty and the seductive charms of Acrasia and her lascivious maidens. On the floating island which is the dwelling-place of Phaedria, murmuring rills, soft winds and lewd songs lull a fiery warrior to sleep. The mural paintings and tapestries in the House of Busirane portray carnal love and beauty of the flesh in a manner which brings out Spenser's poetic genius at the height of its glory. It has been suggested that here outer physical charm often out-dazzles the inward lustre of virtue. "His (Spenser's) morality often appears trite or puerile, or seems an after-thought, a mere sedative after his voluptuous appeal to our eyes." The wanton nymphs of the Marvellous Fountain in the Bower of Acrasia are so enticing that they almost efface the pure and chaste image of Una. Morality, when preached by the poet, seems almost out of place among the manifold seductions of his Fairyland, and "Spenser makes the reader almost cry out against Sir Guyon for devastating the enchanted bower of false delights....Nothing, we seem to feel, can replace that magical garden of luxuriousness, or compare with it in splendour, and make amends for its ruin." This may be a too extreme view. The other extreme view harps on Spenser's power of edification and of propagation of ascetic and religious convictions. Spenser is in this view the sage poet, a "better teacher than Aquinas or Scott." Reasonable and moderate criticism will agree that there is no predominance of either the seductive or the moral element in Spenser's poetry, but that, though obtrusive, both have been put on the same footing.

His imagination inclined naturally to beautiful forms, colours and sounds of this earth and especially to woman's beauty. It had an affinity with Pagan outlook, and was in fact influenced by it. But this imagination was repressed and always held in check by the Christian sense of the vanity of all sensual delights, and by the fear of sin. As Legouis put it, "In his great poem, his innate voluptuousness is in constant antagonism with his earnest, protestant, almost puritanical creed. He would sacrifice neither.

But to compromise and preserve them both, he only could append a moral to the most sensual of his scenes. He reminds us of the artist who paints a splendid woman in the nude and writes 'Chastity' in the margin of his canvas; then paints another, no less beautiful, and, contenting himself with giving an evil cast to her eyes, tells us that it is the portrait of 'Wantonness.' The painter satisfies his moral scruples by giving the two pictures different titles."

The compromise referred to in the extract was a makeshift arrangement, a patched-up truce between sense and spirit, between the claims of poetry and of ethics. In Spenser there is no real sublimation or transmutation of voluptuousness into earnest morality or spirituality. Hence "his religious fervour was superficial rather than deep, more concerned with outward problems than the intimate spirit of Christianity. One finds but few traces of direct communion with Christ in him" and the "Spirit of Gospel is mostly absent from his verse." The Bible was not the most cherished amongst the books he read, nor is it to be recognised as the greatest influence in his poetry. When he comes to reflect on religion, he is generally concerned with one of its superficial aspects, viz., church discipline. In the *Shepheards Calender* he is a Protestant rather than a devout Christian. It must be remembered in this connection that spiritual poetry which was at the same time beautiful and moving and which was based on the sublimation of sense-experience did flourish in England, especially in the seventeenth century. Milton and Vaughan are conspicuous examples. Even Chaucer, Spenser's master, though he took the world easy, had a larger share of the spirit of true Christianity. Spenser was not therefore expected to achieve the impossible.

That Spenser did not progress from sense to spirituality and that all that he attempted was an unsatisfactory compromise between the two, is borne out by the fact that there was no regular evolution of moral or religious feelings in his works. Years did not bring a change in his inner life or in his outlook. More space is given to religious problems (though these were mainly sectarian) in the *Shepheards Calender*, his earliest poem, than in most of his later work. In the *Faerie Queene* the first book is the most religious, as the second is the most moral of all. The other Books might have been equally so. But the poet becomes more and more a romance-writer or story-teller as he proceeds, and "the sustained gravity of the teacher gives place to the capricious fancy of the amorist." Thus there has been no steady progress from " thoughtless half-pagan youthful joy to the pensive mood of the Christian sage." His ideas were determined by circumstances, and were not the product of conviction or inner realisation. It has been aptly remarked that the courtier in Leicester's palace turned to subjects less ecclesiastical than those which had occupied the secretary of Bishop Young. The exile in Ireland under the stern influence of the puritanical Lord Grey of Wilton entertained more serious thoughts than he did in the years that followed Grey's retirement. Similarly the progress of his wooing of Elizabeth Boyle is reflected in the *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion*, while the Heavenly Hymns have to be traced to the despondency of an unsuccessful courtier and the bitter grief of a ruined Irish landlord suffering the pangs of bereavement.

The compromise between sense and spirit was effected, at least in part or in one sphere, through Spenser's acceptance of the Neo-Platonic creed. Neo-Platonism itself was eclectic, and it fittingly flourished at Alexandria which in the 5th century A.D. was the melting-pot of various eastern and Hellenic systems of thought. It gives Spenser full liberty " to follow his instincts and call his joy by the same name as his duty," enables him to " transfigure into angels all the women he loves " and call " all his lover's emotions heavenward aspirations." As a poet, he also feels justified in following his natural bent and in revelling in gorgeous descriptions of all the beautiful forms and colours which have enchanted his eyes in the pageant of life.

In spite of this eclecticism which must be regarded as a defect, Spenser was an idealist because he was not a realist. His scholarship, which was responsible for his eclecticism, was also partly responsible for his idealism in this special sense. It made him a lover of the distant past and a stranger to contemporary life. He was more familiar with the age of chivalry than with his own age, was a dweller in the land of romance as it were, and not in Elizabethan England. Classical mythology and mediaeval life were better known to him than human nature which revealed itself around him every day. Hence, as Hazlitt says, " Spenser's characteristic is remoteness." This has also been called his unhomeliness. The ordinary and familiar did not attract him. Most readers are repelled by this feature of Spenser's poetry and find it very difficult to approach him. It has been remarked that one cannot find an English daisy in his enchanted forests.

If Spenser was heedless of living reality and a lover of the past, it does not follow that he was a careful observer of old manners, customs and institutions. He was not a close student of the middle ages as Scott was, nor of the ancient world. It was impossible for him to gauge the full stature of a historical personage or probe into his psychology or to appreciate the full consequences of an historical event. Contemplation and not observation was his province. Spenser's world was not the world of historic visibility. He was not capable of pure, dispassionate observation of external things. " His word concerning what is outward is not to be taken ; he is unveracious." It cannot be claimed that Spenser reconstructed the past or made the dead live again. The achievement of Shakespeare in his Roman plays has not any parallel in his work. His ideal was exclusively his own creation, and was as different from the world known to his contemporaries as to the world enshrined in history. " The universe generally as it came to his hand, was not to his mind. It refused to dovetail with his conceptions and designs. He was not king in it. So, with small regard to existing interests, he, by a process and magic all his own, transformed it into a Fairy Land....It is a world in which, to the looker-on, anything seems to happen. Events purely considered are bound by no inevitable consequences....In this world there is neither time nor space ; yet it is full of form, colour, and all earthly luxury....this place, somewhere between mind and matter, between soul and sense, between the actual and the possible is precisely the region which Spenser assigns to the poetic susceptibility of impression."

Even where Spenser's characters are in fact suggested by historical men and women, they are not real because they are completely transformed before being admitted into the Fairy Land. He idealises them out of all likeness. He was not a mirror-holder for his contemporaries. " When starting with a living man, friend or foe, his imagination lightened upon and played about him, altering combinations and proportions, adding feature to feature, attribute to attribute, until in his creative delight he forgot whom he intended to paint." Lord Grey de Wilton becomes Artegall, the Knight of Justice ; Leicester appears as Prince Arthur ; Mary is Lucifera or Duessa ; Burleigh is the Blatant Beast.

It has been remarked that in Spenser all objects had to pass up into the region of imagination and " take on an air of far-offness." His scenes and characters, though removed from real life, are not, on that account, wholly artificial. They are easily recognisable as belonging to another world to the laws of which they fully conform. The arms, the decorations, the robe belong to the age of chivalry, the virtues and vices are traceable to the romances or to moral treaties or courtesy books. Lowell observes: "He (Spenser) at first sought for that remoteness which is implied in an escape from the realism of daily life, in the pastoral, a kind of writing which, oddly enough, from its original intention as a protest in favour of naturalness and of human as opposed to heroic sentiments, had degenerated into the most artificial of abstractions. But he was soon convinced of his error, and was not long in choosing between an unreality which pretended to be real and those everlasting realities of the mind which seem unreal only because they lie beyond the horizon of everyday world, and become visible only when the mirage of fantasy lifts them up and hangs them in an ideal atmosphere." (Literary Essays, Vol. IV. Essay on Spenser, pp. 283-84.)

He was of humble birth, one "of the poor scholars" at Merchant Taylors' school assisted by the charity of a town merchant, and subsequently a sizar at Pembroke Hall. The natural outcome of poverty was ambition for competence and fame which his academic career led him to expect as a matter of course. But as he found his hopes difficult of realisation and no liberal help came from patrons, he felt dissatisfied. *Muiopotmos* paints the kind of life which would have given him satisfaction. The *Teares of the Muses*, on the other hand, reflects his disappointment, for all the nine Muses are equally distressed and indignant at being neglected. Baffled ambition stimulated his innate idealism which had also been fostered by literary and philosophical studies. Spenser's imagination loved to dwell on the felicities of a golden age about which he had read and which fitted in well with his visionary temperament. As a consequence, Spenser became a carping critic of his age. "His most constant attitude throughout life was that of discontent. He very seldom shows himself pleased and satisfied, and is quick to pass sentence on persons and manners." Nearly all his works, with the obvious exception of the *Fowre Hymnes*, *Amoretti*, *Prothalamion* and *Epithalamion*, contain satires against the court and the church.

One of the characteristics of the golden age as conceived by the poet was equal opportunity for all, based on equal division of property. This was probably a fling at Anabaptist theories. The Giant in Book V of the *Faerie Queene* is the champion of equality and is ready to level down the hills and to weigh in his scales such things as "winged words." "the true and the false," "the right and so much wrong." He would suppress tyrants and lordlings that the "commons over-awe," and "all things would reduce unto equality." But the poet has exaggerated his zeal and mildly ridiculed him.

At Cambridge Spenser came in touch with the violent and revolutionary spirit of the theological school and imbibed the teachings of Cartwright. But Grindal had been instrumental in getting Spenser admitted to his own old College, and Spenser became a supporter of mitigated Puritanism. Yet the quasi-socialistic doctrines of Cartwright, which led him to declare war on all forms of dignity, scholastic as well as ecclesiastic, and try to bring the church back to its pristine equality, are traceable in Spenser's *Shepheards Calender.* He once dreamt of abolishing prelacy in the manner of the extreme Puritans or Mar-Prelates, and often protested against the ambition, ignorance and luxury of the clergy. These made him look back wistfully on the pure primitive church of the good old days. "In the *Faerie Queene* other traits of the golden age are recalled :

> When good was only for itself desired,
> And all men sought their own, and none more ;
> When Justice was not for most meed out-hired,
> But simple Truth did reign, and was of all admired.

Spenser sings how

> —from the golden age that first was named,
> It's now at earst become a stony one ;
> And men themselves, the which at first were framed
> Of earthly mould, and from'd of flesh and bone,
> Are now transformed into hardest stone. * . .

Spenser's vision of a golden age appears to have made him indifferent to the national ideal of the Elizabethans. The unity which was produced amongst the different communities in England—Catholics, Protestants, the clergy and the laity,—by the apprehension of foreign invasion, was the effect of a glowing patriotism. Queen Elizabeth was looked upon as the symbol of this national unity, and every Englishman regarded himself as pledged to obedience to her. England's aggrandisement under her sovereignty was the aim of her willing servants, who identified their personal ambition with it. Raleigh, Leicester and other worthies have to be appreciated against the back-ground of Elizabeth's England and Elizabeth's dreams of glory. They were knights owing allegiance to this 'fairy queen,' proud of carrying out her commands. This feeling is clearly traceable in the writings of most Elizabethan authors. Literary works were freely dedicated to her, and the virtues of the maiden Queen and her benign rule were the frequent themes of poetry and drama. Some critics are of opinion that Spenser too was captivated by the national ideal of Elizabethan England, and his literary homage to the Queen—fulsome and flattering at times—was the result. She was his Gloriana who did not actually appear in the poem, his Mercilla whose royal virtues shine so resplendently and his Britomart whose chastity was so unique. The *Faerie Queene* was dedicated to her. Her name was cherished by the poet as it also happened to be the name of his mother as well as of his beloved wife. He celebrated her beauty along with her maiden virtues like many other Elizabethan writers. But Legouis thinks that Spenser's panegyrics of the Queen were conventional. An idealist like him was not likely to enthuse over the conditions prevailing in her court. Corruption in the church, the scandals associated with the Queen's private life and English policy in Ireland must have produced in him feelings of revulsion. He was in this respect different from Shakespepare, the author of the English chronicle plays. As a matter of fact, all Spenser's works show him as a man convinced "of the ill-administration of his country, of the corruption of its politicians and clergy. In his eyes, moreover, it was an age of iron for letters and poetry. One can scarcely name a single act of the Queen's Government which did not rouse his protest or stir him to wrath and indignation."[*] Burleigh was held responsible for the evils, but in Book V of the *Faerie Queene* the "Regiment of women" is branded as contrary to the decree of God and the laws of Nature. Spenser is therefore believed by this French critic to have painted the Queen not as she really was, but exactly as she liked to be painted ; and if this was so, it is doubtful if Spenser was inspired by contemporary patriotism. The problems on the solution of which depended the future of England as one of the great powers of Europe, did not interest the poet who was enraptured with the vision of the golden age. A passionate pride in her past achievements and a full comprehension of her destiny seem to have been outside the scope of his vocation as a poet. These had actually manifested themselves in the Elizabethan chronicle plays. Prof. Selincourt says, "A critic has noted that from the year of the Armada down to the end of Elizabeth's reign more than a fifth of all the plays whose titles have survived took their subjects from English history. Thirteen of Shakespeare's (more than a third of the whole) are of the sort." In *King Lear* and *Cymbeline* the interest is other than political; yet even here the Englishman's patriotism is touched on and stimulated. In his historical plays Shakespeare deals specifically with political evils and gives his own suggestions for their cure so that England might be strong and great, although his "whole reading of history was aristocratic" and "anti-popular." But Spenser was unconcerned with them. There is nothing in his writings comparable to John of Gaunt's eulogy of England:

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[*] It was in the royal court that Spenser came most in touch with naked realism which repelled his idealistic and sensitive soul. The gulf was wide between his cherished world and the world he saw around him, and his poetry was divided into two classes. Realism became the source of his satires, while idealism inspired his allegories.

> This other Eden, demi-paradise,
> This fortress built by Nature for herself
> Against infection and the hand of war,
> This happy breed of men, this little world,
> This precious stone set in the silver sea.

or to the stirring lines which close King John:

> This England never did, nor never shall,
> Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
> But when it first did help to wound itself.

or to the proud words of Bolingbroke which may have inspired the soldier-poet Rupert Brooke:

> Where'er I wander, boast of this I can,
> Though banished, yet a true-born Englishman.

Nationalism in Milton takes the form of a plea for civil liberty and liberty of conscience. He "stands for the right to criticise authority, and to carry the light of the individual reason and the individual conscience into every sphere of man's activity." Though he is outspoken in his prose pamphlets, his view is clear enough even in his great poem. Milton's time was different from Spenser's and the questions of national importance pressing for solution differed vastly in the two ages. Yet it is surprising that the great Elizabethan poet should not have manifested any interest in the ideal of popular liberty which, if anything, was more seriously threatened in various spheres during the reigns of Elizabeth and Mary.

An allegory is to be differentiated from a symbol which has a real as opposed to an arbitrary existence. All things beautiful and excellent are symbols of an excellence analogous to them, but ranged higher in nature's scale. "Allegories are abstractions of the understanding and fancy, and it is the especial function of imagination and passion, not by any means to pass by deep thoughts, which are their most strengthening nourishment, but to take them out of the region of the abstract which is that of Science, not of Poetry, and present them to our sympathies in the form of the concrete, investing them with life, its breath, its blood and its motion."* There is delicate and unconscious symbolism in Dante's poetry and in the works of mediaeval mystics. But Spenser's allegories personify abstract virtues and vices. The personification is awkward, and its artificiality is apparent. As the abstractions are divorced from reality, the allegorics are devoid of interest. Lowell points out how they are "too often forced upon us against our will, as people were formerly driven to church till they began to look on a day of rest as a penal institution. The true type of the allegory is the *Odyssey* which we read without suspicion as pure poem, and then find a new pleasure in divining its double meaning, as if we somehow got a better bargain of our author than he meant to give us." Spenser's characters are virtues and vices, not virtuous and vicious men and women. They are "too supreme in their beauty, too terrible in their repulsiveness or glory to be human." They are the product of a mind that has been fixed on an *imaginary world* inhabited by shadowy forms. Study of philosophy and ethics as contrasted with contact with life is the main trait of the mind. It should be noted that an allegory need not always be concerned with abstractions. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is an illustration. While Spenser draws on his scholarship and fancy, Bunyan falls back on his own experience of life. His inner realisation supplies the characters of his allegory, while Spenser's aloofness from reality fills his poem with dim and shadowy forms. These have a remoteness and an unfamiliar air, but the creations of Bunyan "become things as clear to the memory as if we had seen them," because Bunyan himself is "the Ulysses of his prose-epic." It is his life-history, his anguish, trials and conversion that. are recorded in it.

Parallel to the allegory are the pastoral, the fable and mythology in Spenser's work. He deliberately borrowed these forms from older literatures (except probably the pastoral which had been revived during the Renaissance in Italy), as he had borrowed the allegory. These served as veil as well as ornament. As veil, they concealed moral truths which Spenser was so eager to preach and which philosophical studies had impressed on him. Being antique, they were also fit vehicles for abstract notions not inspired by reality.

Spenser's literary ambition also illustrates his idealism. It was shared by his two intimate Cambridge friends, Gabriel Harvey and Edward Kirke, and was aimed at raising the standard of

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* Aubrey de Vere, *Characteristics of Spenser's Poetry.*

English Literature to the level of French and Italian. The achievements of Petrarch and Du Bellay encouraged it. Itlay had not only been foremost in bringing about the revival of ancient culture, but under the leadership of Petrarch, the herald of the Renaissance, had also launched on the task of producing a new and glorious literature. By his celebrated manifesto, Du Bellay had invited French writers to plunder the ancients in order to embellish their own literature and raise it to an honoured position in Europe. Spenser's translation of Du Bellay's *Visions* and *Ruines of Rome* and his sonnet to this distinguished and bold reformer of the French language and literature, are significant evidence of his own literary ambition. His opinion of the contemporary literature of England reflects his dissatisfaction and disgust, thus indicating his visionary nature. Contemporary poetry in his view was nothing but ribaldry and coarse rhyme.* In the *Teares of the Muses* the Muses of Comedy and Tragedy weep over the degeneracy of the stage. Poetry in Spenser's opinion was " no arte, but a divine gift, and heavenly instinct not to be gotten by laboure and learning, but adorned with both ; and poured into the witte by a certain *enthusiasmos* and celestiall inspiration," and he aspired to write noble poetry of this kind " teaching virtue by processes of delight, morality through ensaumple." He identified his personal interest and the cause of virtue and literature, and his desire to rise to fame and to step up to higher social spheres was bound up with his literary idealism.

The English language too was held poor by Spenser, and the Latinisers had not succeeded in improving it very much. Kirke, the commentator on the *Shepheards Calendar*, thought that they had nothing but contempt for their mother-tongue. He himself preferred even archaisms to Latinisms, and believed that " of itself our mother tongue is both full enough for prose and stately enough for verse." Borrowing from French and Italian with which to patch up the holes of English was also condemned by him. Hence Spenser's worship of Chaucer as "the well of English undefiled " and his ambition to uplift the English Language and Literature by following in the footsteps of his great master. He was in this matter largely influenced by the movement for the revival of all that appertained to the past of England. This was also responsible for the antiquarian tastes which came into vogue in England about this time and was in consonance with Spenser's longing for the far-off and distant.

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* **Shepheards Calender, 10th Eclogue.**

No great ideal is realisable. The idealist therefore is confronted with never-ending toil and struggle ; he sees before him a vista of conflict and grim battle. His life is a long journey, the end of which is beyond his ken. It is not for him to enter the promised land of which he may occasionally have only a Pisgah vision. Yet, care-worn and foot-sore, he has to trudge on. The idealist is pensive and gloomy. Nonchalant gaiety and care-free mirth are not meant for him. Humour which casts a gleam of sunshine on human intercourse, he cannot enjoy. His soul must undergo a stern discipline which alone can give moral strength and courage. Hence we find in Spenser a sage, calm and contemplative poet who shrinks from the gross realism of contemporary life and its drab superficialities. The movement of his verse is slow and reflects his world-weariness. His speculative habit is even responsible for his prolixity and digressions. The contrast with his master is worth noticing. With Chaucer life is much easier and pleasanter than with Spenser. His folk are not overburdened with any responsibility for high enterprise. They are gay and mirthful, even comic. They jest and laugh, eat and drink. " The world did not much disappoint Chaucer, nor did he find it a bad world to live in." But to Spenser " Life was no agreeable jaunt " to Canterbury with merry companions, but a sore and terrible conflict. The strain upon individual will, courage and steadfastness is oppressive, and the lonely adventures and dread encounters with dragons and monsters are symbolic of his conception of arduous spiritual struggle.

4. V. N. BHUSHAN

[As in the previous anthology—of poems, so in this, the Editor manages to find a place for himself ! Though he believes that he is primarily a poet, yet his interests embrace many other branches of literature—in all of which he has produced work which is worth the attention of persons that count. In literary and aesthetic criticism—both the quantity and quality of his output is considerable. An almost inborn passion for the study of English Literature, coupled with the experience of more than ten years in teaching the subject to University students, has helped Prof. Bhushan to feel quite at home in the important branches of this subject as well as in general aesthetics. Born in July 1909 at Masulipatam—the place that helped the English to set foot on the Coromandel Coast,—he acquired the habit of thinking and writing on serious literary and aesthetic problems even during his college days. And, thanks to the circumstances in which he is placed, continues to do so! A natural habit of deep thinking, a healthy desire to probe the surface of things in order to arrive at their essence, a talent for analysis as well as for synthesis, and a gift for facile expression—these characterise Prof. Bhushan's writings. Whether the subject be Shakespeare or Shelley, drama or poetry, fiction or criticism, tragedy or comedy, literary research or aesthetic appreciation—he brings to bear upon his work such essential qualities of a good critic as sympathy, learning, disinterestedness, seriousness and sincerity, and vitality and vision. In the essay reproduced here he attempts to throw new light on a comparatively virgin problem which, if accepted as authentic, will redound to his credit!]

A POSSIBLE POETIC RETORT

[*Fitzgerald's translation of Omar's* Rubaiyat *and Browning's* Rabbi Ben Ezra]

Inspired and aided by Professor E. B. Cowell, Edward Fitzgerald prepared his translation of Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat.* In 1858 Fitzgerald sent it to *Fraser's Magazine* for publication. For nearly a year the manuscript lay untouched in the Editorial sanctum of that journal. Almost in disgust Fitzgerald demanded its return, and published it in a small quarto with a very unattractive brown wrapper. He priced it at five shillings—rather high, one should think. Of the 250 copies printed, Fitzgerald sent some to his friends and kept the remaining with Quaritch the publisher.

Though its reception at the hands of the public was next to nothing, it must not be forgotten that Fitzgerald's translation did not fail to attract the attention of his friends and also of some of the literary luminaries of the day. Swinburne has recorded how he and Rossetti purchased copies of Fitzgerald's translation at a penny a copy, and how when next day they went for more copies the man at the stall demanded two-pence. We are further told that within a week or two after that—copies were sold at a guinea each. From this it is not difficult to conclude that though the general public was not familiar with Fitzgerald's translation, some writers and other intellectuals of the day liked and appreciated it very much.

That being the case, it is quite likely that Browning too might have got hold of and read the book. Of course, at the time of the publication of the translation Browning was in Italy remonstrating with Elizabeth Barrett to give up her fad for psychical experiments. It is just possible some friend might have sent a copy of Fitzgerald's translation to Browning. But I proceed on the supposition that Browning did not receive any such thing. The death of Mrs. Browning at Casa Guidi in 1861 broke up "the succession of splendid landscapes, the succession of brilliant friendships, the succession of high and ardent intellectual interests" that the pair were enjoying. The "endless life of the Italian Arcadia" came to an abrupt end. Soon after, Browning left Florence and halting for a time with his father and sister near Dinard, returned to London and took up residence in Warwick Crescent. Already reputed as a poet—with his *Bells and Pomegranates*, *Men and Women*, *Christmas Eve* and *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*—Browning from now onwards concentrated all his attention on poetic pursuits. In 1863 *The Poetical Works of Robert Browning* was published in three volumes. The next year saw the publication of *Dramatis Personae*—containing, among other things, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

Now, if Browning did not see Fitzgerald's Translation while in Florence, I presume that he must have surely seen it between the time of his return to London and the publication of his own *Rabbi Ben Ezra* in 1864. It is very unlikely that Browning could have missed seeing a work which at the time was popular with the poets and other literary men. On seeing it, Browning must have naturally been shocked at the blatant epicurean gospel so skilfully propagated through it. Now, of course, there are some scholars at least who believe that the wine-woman-and-song philosophy of the *Rubaiyat* is only a symbolic mask that Omar had used to express sufi mysticism. But, at the time that Fitzgerald presented it to the public, it was generally taken as the epitome of epicurean doctrines. Now several of us know how Fitzgerald could capture in his translation only the imagery and not the inner meaning of Omar's work. But at that time, with the single exception of Prof. Cowell who realised that Fitzgerald missed the mark,—everybody else believed that the 'Immortal English Translator' gave a very faithful picture of the musings of the 'Persian Infidel.' And it was perhaps due to its peculiarly tickling imagery and wealth of oriental metaphor that the *Rubaiyat* appealed to the public of the day. Fitzgerald once wrote to Prof. Cowell : " Hafiz and Omar Khayyam ring like true metal. The philosophy of the latter is one that never fails in this world."

So then, we can see that the hedonistic substance of the *Rubaiyat* as it was understood to be so then—was diametrically opposed to the god-fearing and optimistic views of Browning the poet. Shocked to find such a godless gospel gaining popularity, Browning, I believe, must have got the idea of repudiating it in as best a manner as he could. It was thus, I think, that *Rabbi Ben Ezra* came to be written.

That the philosophy of the *Rubaiyat* and *Rabbi Ben Ezra* run counter to each other is a fact known to many. The verses from the *Rubaiyat* and *Rabbi Ben Ezra* put side by side in the table given below—offer a glaring contrast. More than that, in some instances, Browning gives just point to point retort to the *Rubai.* Such a thing as this cannot be simple chance coincidence. This is one of the points which makes me believe that Browning, even though he did not avow it publicly, intended his *Rabbi Ben Ezra* to be an effective reply to the soul-stifling message of the *Rubaiyat.* He might have honestly felt that that was the best way of checking and counteracting the possible influence of the eat-drink-and-be-merry gospel on the English reading public. Just go through the verses contrasted in the table below and you will not fail to find therein the hand of design more than that of accident. The juxtaposition of the stanzas is enough eloquent commentary. Still I have made a few remarks against them only to draw the pointed attention of the reader to the glaring contrast, and the retort-like manner in which Browning's stanzas seem to be written.

FROM THE "RUBAIYAT"

A Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
And Wilderness is Paradise enow.

XI

"How sweet is mortal Sovranty!"—think some:
Others—"How blest the Paradise to come!"
Ah, take the Cash in hand and waive the Rest!
Oh, the brave Music of a distant Drum! XIII

FROM "RABBI BEN EZRA"

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop-full bird?
Frets doubts the maw-crammed beasts? IV

Here Omar Khayyam presents his seeming philosophy of wine, woman, and song. He attempts to argue, it seems, that as all else is uncertain and mythical, only the Present should be cared for. 'Take the Cash in hand and waive the Rest.' Browning sharply contradicts such ideas by saying that to believe that we are "formed to feed on joy, to solely seek and find and feast" is nothing but a poor vaunt of life! Such feasts, he says, are the delight of 'maw-crammed beasts.' Feasts there may be, but they cannot help one to escape the doubt that frets all human beings. Faith, not feast, is the solvent of our doubts.

FROM THE "RUBAIYAT"

B Alas, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!
That Youth's sweet-scented Manuscript should close!
The Nightingale that in the Branches sang,
Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows!
LXXII

FROM "RABBI BEN EZRA"

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand who saith "A whole I planned,
"Youth shows but half; trust God: see all nor be afraid!"
I

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a god though in the germ.
XIII

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby:
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold:
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old. XV

Here Omar Khayyam expresses his belief that youth is the best period of man's life, and that when once it is gone is gone for ever. Browning expresses just the opposite idea when he says that 'Youth shows but half' and that it is a stepping stone to the best that is yet to be. He believes that life is a gradual progress from youth to age. 'I shall know, being old' because 'what survives is gold'—says Browning. Omar, on the other hand, bemoans the close of "Youth's sweet-scented Manuscript" and the rose vanishing with the spring.

FROM THE "RUBAIYAT"

C Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argument
About it and about : but evermore
Came out by the same Door as in I went. XXVII

With them the Seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with my own hand labour'd it to grow :
And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd—
"I came like Water, and like Wind I go." XXVIII

How long, how long, in infinite Pursuit
Of This and That endeavour and dispute ?
Better be merry with the fruitful Grape
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit. XXXIX

FROM "RABBI BEN EZRA"

Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate : folly wide the mark !
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark. III

Now, who shall arbitrate ?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive ;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me ; we all surmise,
They this thing, and I that : whom shall my soul believe ?
XXII

In these stanzas Omar depicts the diversity and the resultant futility of the arguments and discussions of the so-called saints and philosophers. From personal experience, he says, he knows that the vague theories of the learned men only help to confirm his belief in the unsolvable mystery and instability of human life. The only harvest that he could reap from sowing his seed of wisdom with the help of Doctors and Saints is the conviction—"I came like water, and like Wind I go." He therefore comes to the conclusion that instead of wasting time in idle pursuits and disputes one should make oneself as happy as possible. Browning, on the other hand, argues that doubt is the very essence of belief, that one who does not 'prize the doubt' is of a low kind. He also stresses the necessity for individual opinion in matters concerning the spirit and the soul, instead of believing in and relying on the arbitrations of others. Personal faith and conviction is the only sheet-anchor of the soul.

FROM THE "RUBAIYAT"

D Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sangs Singer, and sans End? XXIII

FROM "RABBI BEN EZRA"

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh has soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?
To man, propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way? VIII

Continuing the same idea as in the two previous stanzas, Omar suggests that as the final goal of all of us is the grave and nothing else, we should care only for the present and live in as happy a manner as possible. "Make the most"—he exhorts, from the worldly point of view. Browning is irritated that much importance should be attached to the flesh and the things concerning the body. A man with such ideas is a brute, according to him. He goes further and asks—can the care and the development of the body help the long pilgrimage of the soul? To Browning, then, unlike as to Omar, the soul is greater than the body. To think of life in terms of bodily pleasures is gross injustice.

FROM THE "RUBAIYAT"

E Then to the rolling Heav'n itself I cried,
Asking, "What Lamp had Destiny to guide
Her little Children stumbling in the Dark?"
And—"A blind Understanding!" Heav'n replied. XXXIII

FROM "RABBI BEN EZRA"

Not once beat "Praise be Thine!
"I see the whole design,
"I, who saw power, see now love perfect too:
"Perfect I call Thy plan:
"Thanks that I was a man!
"Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what Thou shalt do!"
X

Omar turns to Heaven itself for consolation and guidance, and hears Heaven's reply—'A blind understanding!'—to his question what is man's destiny ? So he believes that man's state in the world is very much like that of a blind cat in a dark room. Browning, on the contrary, sees the 'whole design' of God planned in a perfect manner. And he is glad that he is a man who can share the glory of God's plan. Not only that, he is willing to place himself entirely in the hands of God to be remade complete. To Omar's belief in the blindness of life and destiny, here is Browning's retort of the faith in the design and perfection of God.

FROM THE "RUBAIYAT"

F For in the Market-place, one Dusk of Day,
I watch'd the Potter thumping his wet clay,
And with its all obliterated Tongue
It murmur'd—"Gently, Brother, gently pray ?" XXXVI

Then said another—"Surely not in vain
"My Substance from the common Earth was ta'en,
"That He who subtly wrought me into Shape
"Should stamp me back to common Earth again." LXI

FROM "RABBI BEN EZRA"

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor ! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay—
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
"Since life fleets, all is change ; the Past gone, seize to-day !"
XXVI

Fool, All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall ;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure ;
What entered into thee,
That was, is and shall be :
Times wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.
XXVII

In these stanzas Omar employs the metaphor of the Potter, the wheel and clay, and argues that men are in the hands of God what clay is in the hands of the Potter—with no individuality and initiative. He further says that just as the pot becomes clay when it is broken, so too man descends into dust after death. That is to say, Omar does not believe in any life hereafter. He believes that human life is a tool in the hands of destiny and that it is as dull as that of a lifeless pot.

Browning flares up at this wrongly audacious conviction. He takes up the same metaphor of the Potter, the wheel and clay and argues that though life is fleeting, it yet makes and keeps its record. Life on this earth is not all—'The Potter and the clay endure.' The wheel is ever in motion. The human soul acquires something while on this earth and it is these acquisitions that abide. "What entered into thee, That was, is and shall be." The retort is indeed pointed.

FROM THE "RUBAIYAT"

G One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,
One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste—
The Stars are setting and the Caravan
Starts for the Dawn of Nothing—Oh, make haste ! XXXVIII

FROM "RABBI BEN EZRA"

He fixed thee mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest :
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.
XXVIII

Omar, in this stanza, speaks of the utter transitoriness, the annihilation, the waste and nothingness of this life and the world. It is a nothing we live in and it is to a nothing that we go. Browning agrees that life is a 'dance of plastic circumstance,' but argues that God has fixed man in this purposely. The purpose is to afford an opportunity to man to give his soul its bent. He says that, therefore, man should regard this life as a period of trial and training, instead of complaining of its instability.

FROM THE "RUBAIYAT"

H Ah, fill the Cup :—what boots it to repeat
How Time is slipping underneath our Feet ;
Unborn **To-morrow,** and dead **Yesterday**
Why fret about them if To-day be sweet ! XXXVII

Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring
The Winter Garment of Repentance fling :
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To fly—and Lo ! the Bird is on the Wing VII

Then to this earthen Bowl did I adjourn
My Lip the secret Well of Life to learn :
And Lip to Lip it murmur'd—"While you live
"Drink !—for once dead you never shall return." XXXIV

FROM "RABBI BEN EZRA"

Look not thou down but up !
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, Lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips a-glow !
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what need'st thou with
earth's wheel ? XXX

On their surface, these three stanzas are absolutely hedonistic in conception. Omar argues : Life is brief. Yesterday and tomorrow are beyond our reach. To-day is the only reality man has. As such, there is no time for repentance and tears. Even the earthen bowl of our body through which we should learn the secret of life encourages us to drink while we live, for 'once dead you never shall return.' Therefore, drink and be merry.

To believe and do so is, obviously, to put the body to mean use. To Browning, man is not a mere 'earthen bowl,' but 'heaven's consummate cup.' And it is the wine in that cup that the Master desires and drinks with 'lips a-glow.' He, therefore, says, 'Look not thou down but up ! To uses of a cup....' Do not think that the drinking of wine will teach you the secret of life ; you have to fill the consummate cup of your whole body with the wine (of pure and noble life) that is dear to God !

FROM THE "RUBAIYAT"

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes—or it prospers ; and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face
Lighting a little Hour or two—is gone. XIV

And those who husbanded the Golden Grain,
And those who flung it to the Winds like Rain,
Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn'd
As, buried once, Men want dug up again. XV

Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai
Whose Doorways are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultan after Sultan with his Pomp
Abode his Hour or two, and went his way. XVI

FROM "RABBI BEN EZRA"

Yet gifts should prove their use :
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn :
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole ;
Should not the heart beat once " How good to live and learn ?"
IX

Adverting to his fond theory of the transiency of human life and the world, Omar says that all our hopes have finally to turn to ashes. Some may be nipped in the bud ; some may seem to prosper for a while. But they are all ephemeral, as ephemeral as snow upon the desert's dusty face. Whether one garners golden grain or throws his seeds to the wind—the result is the same. There is no salvation for human hopes. Life is a caravanserai where sultan after sultan abides his hour or two and goes. What then is the use of man trying to achieve anything ?

Browning replies : the gifts that man is privileged to garner and enjoy are of immense use. Even the things that delight the ear and eye are like treasures in our thought. Life is full of God's grace, full of divine gifts and heavenly majesties, could one see them. As such, 'how good to live and learn !', instead of growing sceptic—musing on the transitoriness of life !

FROM THE "RUBAIYAT"

Alike for those who for *To-day* prepare,
And those that after a *To-morrow* stare,
A Muezzin from the Tower of Darkness cries,
"Fools ! your Reward is neither Here nor There !" XXIV

What, without asking, hither hurried *whence* ?
And, without asking, *whither* hurried hence ?
Another and another Cup to drown
The Memory of this Impertinence ! XXX

For, note when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the grey ;

A whisper from the west
Shoots—" Add this to the rest,
Take it and try its worth : here dies another day." XVI

Harping on the same theme, Omar says that there is no such thing as heavenly reward, and that, therefore, there is no use in thinking of the hereafter. Whence or whither—are not questions to be asked in connection with life. That would be impertinence, and the only thing that can drown and make us forget it is the wine-cup. This sort of argument is too much for Browning. Not merely life as a whole, but every day that is born and dead has its own message to man. It has its own gifts of grace. It whispers : " Add this to the rest, take it and try its worth ;" It does not cry : " Fools ! your reward is neither here nor there !"

FROM THE "RUBAIYAT"

K The Ball no Question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But Right or Left as strikes the Player goes,
And He that toss'd Thee down into the Field,
He knows about it all—*He* knows—*HE* knows ! L

For in and out, above, about, below,
'Tis nothing but a Magic Shadow-Show,
Play'd in a Box whose Candle is the Sun,
Round which we Phantom Figures come and go. XLVI

'Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays :
Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays. XLIX

The Moving Finger writes and having writ,
Moves on : nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it. LI

And that inverted Bowl we call The Sky,
Whereunder crawling coop't we live and die,
Lift not thy hands to *It* for help—for it
Rolls impotently on as Thou or I. LII

FROM "RABBI BEN EZRA"

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who mouldest men !
And since, not even while the whirl was worst

Did I,—to the wheel of life
With shapes and colours rife,
Bound dizzily,—mistake my end, to slake Thy thirst: XXXI

So, take and use Thy work,
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o'the stuff, what warpings past the aim !
My times be in Thy hand !
Perfect the cup as planned !
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same !
XXXII

Once more, in these five stanzas, Omar expresses his conviction that life is nothing but a "Magic Shadow-Show" "round which we phantom figures come and go." We are like pawns on a chess-board, like a ball at the mercy of the player. Some Moving Finger from somewhere writes something—and things happen accordingly. No attempt of ours can change their course. Playthings are we merely. Our turning to the sky or heaven is of no use. They are as helpless and impotent as we are. To this kind of agnostic-cum-pessimistic philosophy Browning does not subscribe. He knows his God and he knows what life is meant for. He does not mistake his end. Knowing all this, he places himself unconditionally and entirely in the hands of God. 'My times be in Thy hands.' He does not find fault with the designs of God. 'Perfect the cup as planned.' He submits himself and his work implicitly to God so that He may 'amend what flaws may lurk.'

Looking at life and heaven Omar finds that it is all purposelessness and blindness. Doing the same Browning discovers that it is light and perfection. The contrast is too striking to need any further remarks.

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There is yet another ground. Omar Khayyam lived in the later part of the 11th and the early part of the 12th centuries—

from 1025-1123. Rabbi Ben Ezra, historically known as Abraham Ben Meir Ben Ezra*, also lived at the same time—from 1090-1168. That is to say, Omar and Ben Ezra were, unaware of the fact of course, contemporaries. Of Ben Ezra it is said that "he was distinguished as a philosopher, astronomer, physician and poet" and that "he wrote several treatises on astronomy or astrology, and a number of grammatical works,"† He is further praised: "He was the wonder of his contemporaries and of those who came after him....profoundly versed in every branch of knowledge, with unfailing judgment, a man of sharp tongue and keen wit."‡ Of Omar it is recorded: "At Naishapur thus lived and died Omar Khayyam, busied in winning knowledge of every kind, and especially in Astronomy, wherein he attained to a very high pre-eminence...." when Malik Shah determined to reform the Calendar, Omar was one of the eight learned men employed to do it....It is written in the chronicles of the ancients that this king of the wise, Omar Khayyam, died at Naishapur in the year of the Hegira 517 (A.D. 1123); in science he was unrivalled,—the very paragon of his age...."§ Another learned authority on *Omariana* opines: "Omar was not only a poet, a philosopher, but likewise a great Mathematician and an Astronomer. Omar's work on "L'Algebre" and on a discussion of the definitions of Euclid are well-known...."¶

Thus we see that there are many things in common between Omar and Ben Ezra. The only difference between these two many-sided scholars is their view of life. Now, it strikes me that Browning took Ben Ezra to serve his purpose best. By taking a person who belonged to the same time as Omar, Browning, I think, indirectly wanted to show how two distinguished men of culture living in the same period, with many traits in common—yet differed in their philosophical outlook, and how the contrast should warn men from following Omar's teachings blindly. If there be any who would go to the extent of believing on reading the *Rubaiyat* that the Eleventh and Twelfth centuries were steeped in epicureanism, to such, I feel, Browning desired to point out that contemporary with Omar was living a scholar and philosopher of equal merit—thinking and writing differently. That the philosophy of the Jewish Rabbi is in agreeemnt with that of Browning himself is a different matter. The fact that Browning chose that theme and worked it up in such a manner as to make it appear almost a reply to Fitzgerald's translation is something that cannot be dismissed as chance coincidence.

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* The "Encyclopaedia Britannica."

† Quoted by Dr. Edward Berdoe in his "The Browning Cyclopaedia". (Allen & Unwin Ltd.) 1931.

‡ Dr. J. M. Jost: *Geschichte des Judenthums.*

§ From *Calcutta Review* MLIX quoted in the Introduction to "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam in the Golden Treasury Series (MacMillan Ltd.)—1926 ed.

¶ J. E. Saklatwalla: "The Voice of Omar Khayyam". (A variorum study of his Rubaiyat)—QAYYIAMH Press: Bombay 1936.

There is still another point. On July 8th, 1889, Browning wrote a sonnet entitled—" To Edward Fitzgerald," and it was published in the *Athenaeum* of the 13th of the same month. The sonnet was the result of a rage of incense that Browning felt on reading some lines of Fitzgerald about Mrs. Browning—which were reported in a news-paper. On hearing of the death of Mrs. Browning, Fitzgerald wrote :

> "Mrs. Browning's death is rather a relief to me I must say ; there will be no more 'Aurora Leighs,' thank God ! A woman of real genius, I know, but what is the upshot of it all ? She and her sex had better mind the kitchen and the children, and perhaps the poor. Except in such things as little novels they only devote themselves to what men do much better, leaving that which men do worse or not at all."

This must have been written in 1861—the year of Mrs. Browning's death. Obviously, Browning came to notice these remarks of Fitzgerald only in 1889. Otherwise, there is no reason for such a belated reply. On the very face of it, the sonnet is bitter, savage, and extremely ungentlemanly—and certainly, not worthy of a poet like Browning. Of course, he could not have treated with indifference any slur on his wife's personality as artist and woman. Referring to this incident G. K. Chesterton says :

> "This serene and pastoral decline, surely the mildest of slopes into death, was suddenly diversified by a flash of something lying far below. Browning's eye fell upon a passage written by the distinguished Edward Fitzgerald, who had been dead for many years in which Fitzgerald spoke in an uncomplimentary manner of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Browning immediately wrote the " Lines to Edward Fitzgerald," and set the whole literary world in an uproar. The lines were bitter and excessive to have been written against any man, especially bitter and excessive to have been written against a man who was not alive to reply. And yet, when all is said, it is impossible not to feel a certain dark and indescribable pleasure in his last burst of the old barbaric energy. The mountain had been tilled and forested, and laid out in gardens to the summit ; but for one last night it had proved itself once more a volcano, and had lit up all the plains with its forgotten fire, and the blow, savage as it was, was dealt for that great central sanctity—the story of a man's youth. All that the old man would say in reply to every view of the question, "I felt as if she had died yesterday ...."*

It will readily be granted that there was a stormy side to

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* G. K. Chesterton: "Robert Browning"—"English Men of Letters Series", Macmillan—1930 ed.

Browning's soul, especially as seen in his poetry; but we find that it was "ever well kept in hand." It is true that "indignation graved some of his greatest work." But we must not forget that if "protest was his atmosphere, constructive art was his instrument." All this—including the able defence of Chesterton—taken into consideration—one wonders at "the indecent fury which danced upon the bones of Edward Fitzgerald," the "destructive tool" at work, and the "smouldering anger" flaming skywards.

Between the death of Mrs. Browning in 1861 and the publi tion of the Sonnet in 1889—there is a pretty long gap of nearly thirty years. Now, however much a loving and devoted husband might protest, it is unlikely that time should have failed to lessen his sense of sorrow and loss. But even granting that Browning was an exceptional husband who always "felt as if she had died yesterday," there seems to be some other strong reason also for his unusually fierce attack on Fitzgerald. If Browning had written *Rabbi Ben Ezra* as a reply to Fitzgerald's translation, it is but natural that he should have coupled in his mind the translator with Omar as an infidel and epicurean. This prejudice, distilled by time into a firm opinion, must have been at the back of Browning's thought when he wrote the Sonnet. This is only a supposition, but not without strong reasons. I am supported in my view by Lady Frances M. Sim. Observes she: "In the Sonnet to Fitzgerald, Browning gave vent, probably to a suppressed indignation; the creed of Omar Khayyam, as inaugurated by Fitzgerald, could not but be repugnant to Browning the mystic christian."*

From all this, it appears to me, that Browning intentionally intended his *Rabbi Ben Ezra* to be a sort of reply to the supposed epicurean gospel contained in Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khayyam's *Ruba'yat.* I have just suggested here what has been in my mind for sometime past, and I leave this hypothesis now to scholars and researchers for further elucidation and enlightenment.

[**Note** :—The Roman numbers at the end of the stanzas quoted refer—in the case of the Rubaiyat (first edition 1859) (because the second edition was published in 1868, four years after *Rabbi Ben Ezra*,) to MacMillan's Edition in the "Golden Treasury Series" (1926), and in the case of *Rabbi Ben Ezra* to MacMillan's "The English Poets" edited by Thomas Humphrey Ward, Vol V-1929 ed].

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* **Frances M. Sim : "Robert Browning: Poet and Philosopher". (Fisher Unwin Ltd.) 1925 ed.**

5. PHIROZE EDULJI DUSTOOR

[Born at Navsari in Baroda State on 27th May 1898, Mr. Dustoor took the B.A. degree of the University of Calcutta in 1919 -- securing First Class Honours in English Literature. Continuing his studies at the Presidency College, he passed the M.A. examination of the same University—standing First in the First Class in English, and was awarded the University Gold Medal and Prize, the Regina Guha Gold Medal, the Kshetramohan Chatterji Gold Medal and the Upendranath Mitra Research Scholarship. In 1933 he secured the D.Litt degree of the University of Allahabad for his dissertation on " Legends of Lucifer and Adam, especially in Old and Middle English." During 1935-36 he was " Special Student " at Merton College, Oxford, engaged in research and the study of the organization and guidance of research at the University. Starting his professorial career at the University of Allahabad in 1922, he is now Reader in English at the same place. Dr. Dustoor is the author of many poems, sketches, stories and one-act plays, but literary criticism is his *forte*. It is in this field that he has done very valuable and lasting work—most of which has been published in such standard journals as *Modern Language Review*, *Modern Language Notes*, *Anglica*, *Englishche Studien*, and *Review of English Studies*. Related mainly to Old and Middle English, this work of Mr. Dustoor has attracted the attention of scholars in that sphere, both abroad and in India. In all his work Dr. Dustoor reveals his scholarly bent of mind, his eye for facts that escape the attention of the average reader, his capacity for correlating these facts and for interpreting them authentically and lucidly. In the essay included below Dr. Dustoor is on a philological excursion. and expresses himself fascinatingly about an interesting subject.]

THE WORLD OF WORDS

With the acquisition of speech man may be said definitely to have become human. Few things are more marvellous in a world where so much is marvellous than man's faculty of speech. The evolution of this faculty—for evolution it was; it is no longer seriously contended that a divinely-gifted Adam just stood up and spoke Hebrew or Aramaic or Greek or Dutch, or whatever language can be claimed as the mother of languages;—the evolution of this faculty is shrouded in mystery. Many theories have, indeed, been propounded to explain the origin of language, but none can be said to have explained it adequately. It has been suggested that the first association of sound with sense was of an onomatopoeic kind, that things were named after the sound with which they affected the human ear : " bow-wow ' barks the dog, and bow-vow, accordingly, it is called. Then there is the Interjectional theory, which maintains that pain, surprise, indignation, first evoked speech: "ah", "oh", "pshaw" and the like were, according to this view, man's first utterances. More mystic is the contention which postulates a necessary harmony between sound and sense : everything, it is believed, has its peculiar ring, and language was born of the primitive instinct by which—in the words of Max Müller, who propounded this theory—" every impression from without received its vocal expression from within " ; thus, the ringing of a bell inevitably called forth " ding-dong." A fourth view sees the genesis of language in the vibration of the vocal chords started by the natural release of breath during a strong muscular effort ; when primitive man heaved and pulled together the particular release-sound occasioned by a particular act would immediately, it is argued, be associated with the act and serve as a name for it.

Bow-wow theory, Pooh-pooh theory, Ding-dong theory, Yo-he-ho theory, to employ the names jocosely applied to these four hypotheses after the nature of the first utterances each in turn indicates,—none, it is evident, plucks out the heart of the mystery. Let us be content with the bare fact that in the dark backward and abysm of time man evolved the faculty of speech and thereby entered on his career as " Homo Sapiens." And now for ages he has expressed himself in " words, words, words "; he can hardly think today except in words. Words reflect his culture ; things may be the sons of heaven, but it is certain that words are the daughters of men. Consequently, however fruitless the study of linguistic origins has proved and may long continue to prove, the study of linguistic growth and development has proved, and must always prove, of immense cultural significance. The science of linguistics illuminates much in the history of human progress that would otherwise remain obscure. As an historical growth, language marks stages of civilization and, like geological fossils, records phases of culture long extinct. As a psychological phenomenon, as a medium apt to be unconsciously moulded by the minds that employ it, it affords interesting and instructive glimpses of the working of human reason and unreason.

The world of words is peopled with the ghosts of man's dead usages and beliefs no less than with the children of his living experience. For, words are microcosmic history ; they are crystallised human wisdom ; they are milestones along the path man has trodden through the ages ; they are memorials of his sublimest hopes and aspirations and achievements ; they are sad mementoes of his too human foibles and eternal failures ; they are faithful revelations of the strength and the weakness of the man on whose lips they have had and continue to have their being,— men of the study and men of the market-place ; poets and philosophers and ploughmen ; priests and prophets and kings ; rogues and vagabonds and thieves ; saints and sceptics ; war-makers and peace-makers ; workers and thinkers ; gownsmen and townsmen ; burgesses and backwoodsmen ; philistines and barbarians ; men of high degree and men of low ; all the sorts and conditions of men that have woven the chequered pattern of history.

But I must descend from these generalizations and illustrate with a few chosen instances the interesting witness that language bears to human history and morality. Let us, to begin with, consider the words *idiot* and *dunce*, and we shall discover something of the Greek sense of complete living and social responsibility enshrined in the one word, and something of the conflict of ideals and outlook in the age of the Renaissance reflected in the other. *Idiot* goes back, through French and Latin, to the Greek "idiotes", literally 'a private person', from "idios" meaning 'private'. The Greek noun was originally used to characterize one who undertook no public responsibility ; but, since participation in public life was to a Greek a necessary part of a complete education, the word came gradually, in Greek itself, to signify an untaught or uneducated person, a layman. Something of these Greek senses of the word survives in the English of the seventeenth century, several examples being found in the works of Jeremy Taylor, who more than once brackets "ideots" (as he calls them) with "private persons." But the word is today charged with a frankly derogatory signification ; from indicating one whose powers were but undeveloped it has come to denote one actually deficient, a congenital nitwit. And this deterioration is itself instructive. The deterioration of words like *crafty*, *sly*, *cunning*, which originally implied skill and knowledge, illustrates one weakness in man : his proneness to turn his superiority to evil account. The deterioration of *wanton* and *lewd*, which at one time meant no more than 'uneducated ', 'unlettered ', 'lay ', but now connote lasciviousness, illustrates another: man's proneness to slip from ignorance to impudicity, from lightness of heart to incontinence of spirit. The sinking in the scale of *idiot*, *silly* (once equivalent, like German "selig", to "blessed", "happy") *simple*, *innocent*, and a number of similar words illustrates a third failing: our tendency to pass from condescension to more or less open contempt in our attitude to those unversed in the ways of the world.

The history of *dunce* is very different but equally informative. The word is, by a strange irony, descended from the name of the Subtle Doctor,—"the wittiest of the school divines," as Hooker called him—Duns Scotus. For, at the Revival of Learning, the Schoolmen and all their works stank in the nostrils of the humanists, and the hair-splitting of the Scottists in particular, who were dominant in the Universities, drew the concentrated fire of humanists and reformers alike. These champions of the old learning, these Dunsmen, as they were derisively named, had only Duns learning, which was mere sophistry; they were perverse obscurantists impervious to the new learning: stupidity was the badge of all their tribe. To the new generation a Dunsman, or a Duns, was incurably dull-witted; and, thereafter, one needed only the illogical logic of association to conclude that every common or garden dullard was a dunce.

This commemoration of a great name is doubtless unfortunate, but in all ages men have, more or less felicitously, appropriated or adapted names—names both of persons and of places—to enable them to designate the latest additions to the growing family of their conceptions. By every such christening there necessarily hangs a tale, a tale maybe of adventure or misadventure, of wisdom or folly or worse, but always of a human experience. In English alone there are hundreds of such words. I can here only suggest how such words from place-names as *indigo*, *silk*, *copper*, *cashmere*, *calico*, *lawn*, *damask*, *muslin*, *worsted*, *port*, *sherry*, *madeira*, *burgundy*—I might go on adding to the number—tell of the currents of commerce and trade; how the words like *mackintosh*, *macadam*, *hansome*, *nicotine*, *guillotine*, *dahlia*, *fuchsia*, *shrapnel*. *gat(ling)*, *volt*, *galvanism*, *mesmerism*, bear witness to the devices, inventions, discoveries, and scientific achievements of the past; how *sandwich*, *chesterfield*, *brougham*, *spencer* bespeak the whims and fancies of the individuals they commemorate and, incidentally, the capriciousness of Dame Fortune, who has conferred a species of immortality on four noble lords otherwise worthy of being well and truly forgotten; how the word *derrick*, on the other hand, which is a noted hangman's name transferred to a hoisting apparatus, reveals not only the grim humour of which man is capable but also the democracy of language, which admits to its parliament of words a public executioner as freely as peers of the realm ; how, *maudlin, tawdry, pantaloons*, descended as they are from the honoured names, respectively of Mary Magdalene a popular English saint, St. Audrey, and St. Pantaleone, the patron saint of the Venetians, illustrate the power of more or less accidental associations to give even a saint, so to speak, a bad name. And, of course, there is the lesson of *boycott*, a word that has passed into several languages, and the not very different one of *lynch*, another word of international currency, which, whether an appropriation of the name of Charles Lynch, a Virginian Justice of the Peace, or of a locality called Lynch's Creek, belongs here. And, if these words are shameful reminders of the passions that often move a mob ("mobile vulgus" indeed !), *gerrymander*—enshrining the name of Elbridge Gerry, Governor of Massachusetts, who manipulated electoral divisions with a view to favouring his own party—and *burke* (meaning 'smother', though only metaphorically these days)—which basely immortalizes the scoundrel William Burke, who carried on a nefarious trade in dead human bodies, making the corpses he needed by smothering his unfortunate victims—are two of a class of words that equally shamefully, and, one might add, superfluously, remind us of the cupidity and greed that often impel individuals.

One might go on almost endlessly like this, but I cannot pass on without adverting to the curious histories of two more words in this class. One of them is centuries old and is affiliated to a personal name, which itself originated as but a nickname ; the other was coined only the other day and is to be traced back to the name of a locality. *Beggar* and *debunk* are the words to which I allude. In the twelfth century a priest of St. Liege known as Lambert Bègue, or le Bègue, that is, Lambert the Stammerer, founded a lay sisterhood the members of which lived a religious life and were not unnaturally called *Beguines*. From the word *Beguine*, on the one hand, came *biggin*, 'a sort of cap or hood', mentioned by Shakespeare in the lines :

> He whose brow with homely biggin bound
> Snores out the watch of night.

But the particular development of *Beguine* with which we are here concerned is the imitation or adaptation of it as *Begard* as a name for one of a lay brotherhood which originated in the Low Countries on the model of the female Beguines. The name *Begard* was soon, however, assumed by many idle mendicants, who overran Europe and soon came to be denounced by Popes and Councils and were subsequently persecuted by the Inquisition; and so, when in the thirteenth century the Old French *begard* passed into English as *beggare* (*beggere*) it already had the sense of 'mendicant.' Our verb *beg* is perhaps only a back-formation from the noun. As for the very expressive recent formation *debunk*, it is an American derivative of *bunk*, the clipped form of *bunkum* or *buncombe*, itself at one time an exclusively American word, being, in fact, the name of a town in North Carolina. And the credit for putting *bunkum* on the linguistic map belongs to the member of the Sixteenth American Congress (1820) who, knowing that democracy lives by words alone and constituencies do not suffer dummies gladly, disregarded the entreaties of a weary House and insisted on being heard, not because he had a substantial contribution to make to the debate, but because he had, as he confessed, to make a speech for his constituency, Buncombe. Man has aways talked a lot of bunkum, but the word was born only that day on the lips of the honourable member for Buncombe; as Bacon would have said, "the word is late, though the thing is ancient." And now, when we prick the bubble of the sentimental or other bunkum, or bunk, that has formed round an institution or an individual, we may be said to *debunk* the idol; we may to-day even go further and say that, thanks to Lytton Strachey and the spirit of the age, the *debunker* is very much abroad; and I do not very well see what is to prevent our saying of Shakespeare, for instance,—the debunking of whom is, indeed, already well afoot—that he must prove a most fruitful *debunkee*.

But we must not digress from our theme, which is the illustration of the history and the morality that are embedded in words. I am afraid I have so far done little more than depress you with unpleasant glimpses of the frailty of man and have assembled evidence for reconstructing the history of his decline and fall rather than of his ascent. And yet there is ample evidence in language of man's better nature, his idealism, and his ethical and intellectual development. Indeed, the very degeneration a word has suffered is sometimes indicative, not of actual human demoralization, but of a grasp of the psychology of demoralization; not, in other words, of a loss of rectitude, but of a gain in perspicacity. I am thinking here of words like *err*, *revel*, *lust*, and *vice* itself. These at one time implied no moral censure ; that to-day they, in greater or lesser degree, connote wrong-doing is not because in the interval man fell from innocence, but because he rose in understanding. He is to-day not less moral but more experienced. He has perceived the germs of moral laxity in what formerly seemed fairly innocent forms of conduct or character, and has experienced as inevitable the moral landslide from errantry to error, from the pursuit of pleasure to the cult of self-indulgence, from a venial fault or failing to moral depravity. It was not till he had begun to be conscious of the easy descent into Avernus that he came to impregnate comparatively harmless terms with more or less derogatory significations. Every such birth of awareness is a moral as well as intellectual gain.

But these illustrations are after all of a negative kind. Let us take positive instances of man's moral development colouring with greater spirituality words already testifying to his leanings to virtue's side. Take the word *virtue* itself. The development of its meaning very clearly reflects man's spiritual advance and the unfolding of a truer sense of values. To the virile Romans *virtus*, from which our word is descended, was just manliness or virility or courage, for that was for them *the* quality of a man, or *vir*. This primary notion of power or valour in the Roman use of the word found and continues to find a place in English and other languages. A sixteenth century English writer could speak of a fighter "having fought with great *virtue*"; a century later another could still attribute it to "his warlike *virtue*" that a certain Roman became more than seven times consul. Chaucer, again, wrote of April showers bathing every vein of vegetation

> in swich licour
> Of which *vertu* engendered is the flour.

There is, says Shakespeare, "much *virtue* in If" ; Milton recalls the "*virtuous* ring and glass" in the story of Cambuscan bold ; and we speak to this day of claiming promotion by (or in) *virtue* of seniority, or of winning a *virtual* victory. Moreover, just as medieval and Renaissance writers mentioned "stones of *virtue*", we talk of objects of *virtu* and of the *virtuosos* who dabble in them. But it is centuries since, with a higher conception of what constitutes true manliness and human worth generally, the word *virtus* both broadened and spiritualized its connotation ; and consequently *virtue* to-day—apart from the fossil uses we have just observed—may imply piety or temperance or humility or chastity or any other form of worthy conduct. And yet, having embraced so much, the word, curiously enough, tends to be limited in its application to one or other particular excellence, which thus becomes *princeps inter pares.* And this is another exhibition of man's shifting sense of values. Thus, there is evidence to show that,—to quote no less an authority than Sir Walter Scott—" in many parts of Scotland the word *virtue* is limited entirely to industry." Can there be a more succinct commentary than this on the character of the hardy race of which it speaks? There is evidence, too, to show that in modern usage chastity or sexual purity tends to be the virtue of virtues, the virtue *par excellence.* It is certain, for instance, that it is " sainted chastity " that is exclusively and finally exalted in the parting harangue of the Attendant Spirit in *Comus* :

> Mortals that would follow me,
> Love Virtue : she alone is free ;
> She can teach ye how to climb
> Higher than the sphery chime ;
> Or if Virtue feeble were,
> Heaven itself would stoop to her.

Were this all, however, this limitation would seem to be no more than yet another proof of our modern dangerous preoccupation with sex. But, as even this extract from *Comus* must suggest to those familiar with the story it relates, there is a tendency to narrow the application of the word, not to chastity merely, but to chastity in women. Bewailing a woman's stooping to folly, Richardson confesses that nothing can excuse her fall, for " virtue is preferable to all considerations " (*Pamela*). This unqualified use of *virtue* is perfectly intelligible to us ; do we not, indeed, point to a woman—and never a man, except playfully—as of *light* or *easy virtue* ? This limitation of the word surely bespeaks nothing less than man's chivalrous idolization of woman, his placing of her on a pedestal of which he knows himself to be unworthy. Thus, the whirlgig of time brings in its revenges : what once strutted about as the pith of manliness has come to signify the soul of womanhood.

I must leave it to you to discover how, if the sematic histories of *knave*, *villainy*, and *cheat*, say, are not flattering to human nature, those of *knight*, *chivalry*, and *barter*, on the other hand, most certainly are ; or how the present prestige—to use a word that has itself risen in the scale—of words like *thrift*, *worship*, *kind*, and *sincere* marks an advance in human sense and sensibility. I must cross over to that very interesting class of words which enshrine relics of an earlier and cruder civilization. As fossil records of ancient customs and usages or of primitive myths and beliefs, these words tell us what we were in the past and, by implication, furnish a chapter in the history of human progress. Space does not permit me to do more than offer a suggestive selection of such words. Take, for instance, the vocabulary pertaining to writing and books. To *write*, as also Latin *scribere*, was originally to scratch on a piece of bark; the beech, which the Germanic peoples employed for the purpose, is commemorated in our word *book*, just as the inner bark utilized by the Romans gave them their *liber*, and is consequently preserved in our *library*, and just as the inner rind of the Egyptian rush, papyrus, gave the Greeks their word *biblos*, and so survives in our *bible*. And, of course, it is to this same papyrus that we must turn for the parentage of *paper*. Our *style*, which now indicates a manner of writing, or, generally expressing oneself, was formerly only the implement for writing called by the Romans a *stilus* (Cf. our *stylograph*). Similarly, our *character*, in all its senses, is but the Greek *kharakter*, a tool for stamping or marking. Or consider the words *score* and *tally*. When we *score* at cricket or buy a *score* of eggs, we do not, but very well might, recall the practice of cutting (or shearing—the word is cognate) a notch in a stick to reckon numbers, and, more particularly, to indicate every twenty when counting sheep or a large herd of cattle. The *tallying* of things was originally observing that the two halves of the *tally*, or stick on which an account was scored or notched and which was then cleft in two, creditor and debtor each retaining one half, were in agreement. It is interesting to note that the use of such tallies by the Exchequer prevailed till a little more than a hundred years ago and that it was, in fact, the overheating of the flues consequent on using the accumulated tallies as fuel for the stoves in the Houses of Parliament, that led to the burning down of the Houses in 1834. Or take the words *fee*, *pecuniary* and *chattel*. They all point to a time when wealth was reckoned in terms of cattle; for, Old English *feoh* and Latin *pecus*, to which the first two words can be traced, both at one time meant cattle before they came to mean money generally; in fact, they are but different developments of the same Indo-European word. And *chattel* is only a doublet of *cattle*. Or take a couple of miscellaneous instances. With some people money does not seem to weigh at all; nevertheless, though they *spend* it never so thoughtlessly, they do, etymologically speaking, weigh it out as punctiliously as did Abraham to Ephron in remote antiquity. And the *curfew* orders to which our generation is no stranger are reminders of an age when, houses being entirely of wood and the danger from fires at night very great, householders were directed by the bell that tolled the knell of parting day to cover their fires for the night. And *curfew* suggests *kerchief* or *handkerchief*, which recalls another covering custom,—the medieval custom of women covering their heads with a cloth, hence known as a kerchief. I do not know, however, if I have done right in noticing this word here. For, it is surely not to be assumed that the Wife of Bath's headgear, ridiculous as it appears to have been—

> Hir coverchiefs ful fyne weren of ground—
> I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
> That on a Sonday weren upon hir heed—

was really more primitive than the hats with which her modern counterpart of Bath or Birghton putatively adorns herself. But the evolution from the kerchief of what is playfully described as a noserag—the Artful Dodger's " wipe "—certainly is a credit to our civilization, and I may plead that as my excuse.

So much about earlier customs and practices fossilized in language. The myths and beliefs of our forefathers are equally well reflected in the vocabulary of everyday life. Classical mythology provides us, among other words, with *atlas* and *chimericl* and *protean* and *panic* and *tantalize.* The now discredited science of astrology and the older Teutonic pantheon, between them, furnish the names of the days of the week, names which, in a quaver of Christian sensibility, the early Quakers rejected in favour of the non-commital First Day, Second Day, and the like. Belief in astrology, again, has given us our *influence* and *aspect* and *disaster* and *ill-starred* and *saturnine* and *jovial* and *mercurial* and *lunatic* and *moon-struck.* When we speak, even figuratively, of *bewitching* or *enchanting* or *charming* or *casting a spell* we innocently associate ourselves with the crude doctrines of witchcraft demonology. It is, likewise, an apprehension of the occult that really finds expression in *glamour.* A corruption of *grammar,* the word in its present form was first used in the Scotch dialect to signify necromancy or magic, which was popularly reckoned within the ambit of every Dominie Sampson with his store of "grammar" or knowledge, especially of Latin. Both the original meaning of *glamour* and the close relation in which it formerly stood to *grammar* find interesting expression in the fourth stanza of Burns's *Captain Grose's Peregrinations* :

> Ilk ghaist that haunts auld ha' or cham'er,
> Ye gipsy-gang that deal in glamour,
> And you deep-red in hell's black grammar, Warlocks and witches,
> Ye'll quake at his conjuring hammer, Ye midnight bitches.

For their part, words like *halcyon*, *sardonic* and *amethyst*—to take only three instances—recall the unnatural natural lore of earlier days. For, our use of *halcyon* to mean 'peaceful' or 'calm ,' especially in the phrase *halcyon days*, points to the classical fable that the kingfisher or *halcyon* (etymologically equated to 'sea-breeder') bred about the winter solstice in a nest floating on the sea and, for the fortnight or so that it sat brooding, charmed the elements into a peculiar calm. As for *sardonic* and *amethyst*, sardonic laughter originally signified the strange convulsive laughter ending in death that resulted from eating a certain Sardinian plant, and the amethyst is so called because it was supposed by the ancients to act as a charm against intoxication.

Then, again, as you probably are well aware, several very common words have their roots in the rudimentary physiology of early times. Previous to Harvey's great discovery, in 1628, of the circulation of the blood medical science (as Chaucer's portrait of the Doctor of Phisik serves to illustrate) was grounded in astrology and an elaborately fantastic physiology. The body, it was maintained, was composed not only of solids and liquids, but also of aeriform substances, which flowed along the arteries and were, indeed, of primary importance. Three kinds of these volatile elements or spirits as they were called were recognized, —natural spirits, vital spirits and animal spirits ; and to this day, accordingly, we speak of *animal spirits*, and *high* or *low spirits*, and *spiritedness* generally. In like manner, *humour*, *humorous*, *temper*, *temperament*, *complexion* and the rest point back to the crude physiology of the liquids in the body. Blood, phlegm, bile or choler, and (an entirely fictious) black bile or melancholy: these were the four liquid constituents, or *humours*, so called from the Latin word for "liquid." The commixture of these humours determined one's *temperament* (literally 'mixture') or *complexion* (that is, 'weaving together'). According as one or other of these humours predominated in the system the resulting temperament or complexion was *sanguine* or *phlegmatic* or *choleric* or *melancholic*; if, however, the balance of humours was greatly disturbed, one way or another, a *distemper* followed.

This was what we might call the physiological "comedy of humours." When Ben Jonson wrote his "Comedy of humours" the word *humour* had already come to mean 'eccentricity, whimsicality, oddity', such as is produced by an excess of one of the humours. Witness the Induction to his *Every Man Out of his Humour*:

> In every human body
> The choler, melancholy, phlegm and blood,
> By reason that they flow continually
> In some one part, and are not content,
> Receive the name of humours. Now thus far
> It may, by metaphor, apply itself
> Unto the general disposition;
> As when some one peculiar quality
> Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
> All his affects, his spirits and his powers,
> In his confluctions, all to run one way,
> This may be truly said to be a humour.

Once the word had passed into a metaphor, it was but a short step to pass from the comedy of metaphorical humours to the present-day humour, so to speak, of comedy,—to our use, that is, of *humour* as comicality or the faculty of perceiving the odd or the incongruous.

Our language to this day bears traces too of those ancient pseudo-scientific theories that assigned particular responsibilities for various emotions and states of mind to particular organs of the body. The heart, for instance, was regarded as the seat of affection and the emotions generally; hence we still *give our hearts* to those we love, or *hold them near our heart*; we are *touched at heart* if we are not *stony-hearted* or *heartless*, and applaud worthiness whether of *heart or head.* And it is because the bowels too were considered the seat of tender feelings that the Bible speaks—and we too may still, if somewhat archaically, speak—of our *bowels yearning* or *being troubled for* somebody and of the *bowels of compassion.* The heart, again, was the seat of spiritedness and courage,—as, indeed, the word *courage*, from Latin *cor*, 'heart,' itself suggests; and that is why one may still *pluck up* or *take heart*, or, contrariwise, *feel one's heart sink*, or *put one's heart into* one's work, or have or not *have the heart* to do a thing. And that is why too we have come to associate the word *pluck*, formerly a common term for heart, liver and lungs (which could be removed, as it were, at one pluck) with courage, determination and spirit. When, therefore, we say that a coward *wants pluck*, we are but using metaphorically a word which, in his famous French-English dictionary, Cotgrave used as synonymous with " the offals of an edible creature " and Swift employed literally for " heart " when he wrote to Stella : " It vexes me to the pluck that I should lose walking this delicious day." But the heart was, further, looked upon as the source of understanding, thought and memory ; and, though we cannot to-day write, as Shakespeare still could, " Would heart of man once think it ?", and though the revisers of the Authorised Version felt called upon to substitute " understanding " for " heart " in the *Hosea* passage : " Ephraim is like a silly dove without heart,"—though we cannot any longer use such expressions, we still *lay a lesson to heart* and know a thing *by heart* or, as the French say, *par coeur.* How various, again, were the emotions associated with the spleen and the stomach is evident from a study of Shakespeare alone : *spleen* stands now for merriment, now for peevishness and ill-humour, now for caprice, and now again for a hot or proud temper and impetuosity ; and *stomach* implies resentment or pride or courage, besides appetite or inclination. Doubtless we do not to-day use these words so much or so variously but we may still, in Pope's metaphor, enter the gloomy Cave of Spleen, we may *wax splenetic,* or have a *fit of spleen* and even *vent our spleen* on others ; and we may still characterize haughtiness as the possession of a *proud* or *high stomach.*

Finally, some current words and phrases can be traced to long-exploded philosophical speculation. We no longer accept the doctrine of Empedocles that fire, air, water and earth are the elements of matter, the four simple substances that compose the complex material universe ; nor do we believe with Paracelsus that different kinds of spirits inhabit the four different elements. Nevertheless we still call fire *the devouring element,* refer to the *fury of the elements* during a storm, say of one who is like a fish out of water that he is *out of his element,* and, generally, retain the fiction of the *four elements.* And, though not as spirits of fire, air, water and earth, yet as words at different removes from their primary applications, *salamander, sylph, nymph, gnome* flit about among us to this day. Similarly, modern physics and chemistry employ the word *ether,* a word which recalls the obsolete Aristotelean notion of a fifth element more subtle than the four material elements, filling all superlunar space and constituting the substance of the heavenly bodies. We no more believe now in the existence of a subtle fifth element, called in mediaeval Latin *quinta essentia,* than we do in the four elements ; we no longer believe that this *quintessence,* as it came to be called in English, underlies all things and can be distilled by alchemic processes ; but the word, nevertheless, serves to-day to denote the inmost soul of a substance or quality, or the perfect embodiment of the characteristics of a class. Lastly, common sense to be sure would tell us that the phrase—or word—*common sense* ineluctably means what it does to-day, to wit, normal intelligence or sagacity such as is common to all men—or at least should be, for has it not been waggishly observed that "there is not a more uncommon thing in the world than common sense ?" And yet this "philosophy of common sense," as we might term it, is a mistaken one : this expression, like those we have just noticed, points to an antiquated classical hypothesis. Over and above the five senses the Greek metaphysicians postulated an "internal" sixth sense which was a common bond or centre of the five and reduced the impressions received from these to a common consciousness. Their Latin followers took over the Greek name for this faculty—*koine aisthesis*— as *sensus communis*, and this duly passed, through French, into English as *common wit* or *common sense.*

And with this I must conclude my consideration of how the familiar language of to-day embalms the customs and beliefs of our forefathers, and what, after Browning's Paracelsus, we may sum up as

> their half-reasons, faint aspirings, dim
> Struggles after truth, their poorest fallacies,
> Their prejudices and fears and cares and doubts.

6. SUKUMAR DUTT

[Here is another illustrious scholar of Bengal who has made his substantial contribution to English literary criticism. In the course of his long professorial career extending over quarter of a century, he has written and published several papers of value—mostly in journals and periodicals. But the typical scholar that he is—he has kept no 'docket' of them! Born at Barisal (East Bengal) in 1891, Mr. Sukumar Dutt was educated at the Scottish Churches College and the Presidency College—both of Calcutta. In 1910 he graduated with First Class Honours in English Literature—obtaining the University Gold Medal. He secured a double M.A. degree (in Group A—Modern English, and in Group B—Old and Middle English)—in 1912 and 1913. He also obtained the Griffiths Memorial Prize for original research and the University Jubilee Research Prize and Gold Medal in 1916 and 1922 respectively. In 1934 he was awarded the Ph.D. degree by the University of Calcutta on the unanimous recommendation of Prof. Emile Legouis of the Sorbonne, Dr. Oliver Elton and Dr. H. W. Garrod of the Oxford University, in respect of his Doctorate thesis on "The Supernatural in English Romantic Poetry, 1780-1830."

Dr. Sukumar Dutt has pursued researches in Pali and ancient Indian Buddhism also. His *Early Buddhist Monachism*—published in 1924 in London and New York in "Trübner's Oriental Series"—is a standard work on the subject. Besides, he has written a book on "The Problem of Indian Nationality," published by the University of Calcutta in 1926, and a book of short stories in Bengali, entitled *Sapta-purā* (Seven Tales of Ancient Times), in which he recreates the atmosphere of ancient Buddhist life and culture in India.

Dr. Dutt has been in the teaching profession since 1913. He started his career as Lecturer in English at the Ripon College, Calcutta. Later he worked for some years in the University of Dacca, and then changed over to the Ramjas College, Delhi, where he was Principal from 1937 to 1943. Since then he has been Reader in English at the Delhi University. The paper published here was originally an address delivered by Dr. Dutt at a meeting of the English Seminar of the Ramjas College, on March 12, 1942, under the presidentship of Hon'ble Pandit H. N. Kunzru, Member of the Council of State, and is printed now for the first time. Dealing as it does with one of the ever-interesting problems in English literature, it makes profitable reading, and reveals the writer's vigour of thought and subtlety of treatment.]

OPIUM AND COLERIDGE

After the pain of having to listen to three serious literary discourses, the craving for an anodyne is perhaps excusable. And the anodyne most proper to be offered at a meeting of distinguished English scholars is of course opium for its well-known associations with English literature.

In the early years of the last century, there was a brilliant group of learned and talented men in England who were given to what De Quincey calls the 'divine luxuries' of opium. Their names have been enshrined by him in the Original Preface to his *Confessions*: Wilberforce, Milner, Lord Erskine, Mr. Some Philosopher, to whom De Quincey extends the charity of anonymity, and, last but not the least, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. To these must be added the name of De Quincey himself who, along with Coleridge among the opium-eaters, has placed English literature under eternal indebtedness to opium.

These English gentlemen,—let me remark in passing,—were *eaters*, and not *smokers* of opium in the Chinese fashion.

It was comparatively early in life that Coleridge started the eating of opium and became an inveterate addict to it with advancing age. The pull of opium grew so strong upon him that, we are told by De Quincey, he hired men at Bristol—porters, hackney-coachmen and others,—to oppose by force his entrance into a druggist's shop. An imaginary scene of encounter between Coleridge, the Transcendental Philosopher, and his hired mentors at the door of a druggist's shop, has been depicted by De Quincey with great gusto:

" 'Oh, Sir,' would plead the suppliant Porter,—suppliant, yet semi-imperative (for equally if he *did*, and if he *did not* show fight, the poor man's daily 5s. seemed endangered),—'really you must not; Consider, sir, your wife and....'

Transcedental Philosopher (quoting *Othello*)—'Wife! what wife? I have no wife.'

Porter—'But, really now, you must not, sir. Didn't you say no longer ago than yesterday....'

Trans. Philos —'Pooh, Pooh! yesterday is a long time ago. Are you aware, my man, that people are known to have dropped down dead for timely want of opium?'

Porter—'Ay, but you tell't me not to hearken....'

Trans. Philos —'O, nonsense. An emergency, a shocking emergency, has arisen —quite unlooked-for. No matter what I told you in times long past. That, which I *now* tell you, is—that, if you don't remove that arm of yours from the doorway of this most respectable druggist, I shall have a good ground of action against you for assault and battery.' "

Coleridge's addiction to opium, however, would bear no further interest than that of mere chit-chat of literary biography if there were no traceable connection between the effects of opium and his poetry. The subject was in fact investigated by an American scholar and critic, J. M. Robertson, nearly forty-five years ago. In his *New Essays towards a Critical Method* (1897), he attributed the peculiar excellence of the *Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan* to 'abnormal brain-states' induced by opium. The well-marked difference in quality between Coleridge's earlier poems and his later poetic achievements could be accounted for, according to Robertson, by the change wrought in his mental faculties by the first effects of the use of opium. "So that," the critic concludes, "what men regard as his mere bane, the drug to which he resorted as a relief from suffering....is rather, by reason of its first magical effects, the special source of his literary immortality."

The addiction to opium would thus become a fact of central significance in the study of Coleridge's poetry, much in the same way as Milton's marriage with Mary Powell, Wordsworth's youthful affair with Annette Villon or Keats's frustrated love-longing for Fanny Brawne.

It will be readily granted that opium cannot make a poet: otherwise the world, especially China, would be swarming with poets by now, and those illustrious makers of modern China like the late Dr. San-yut-sen and his followers, who led so vigorous a campaign about half a century ago against consumption of opium in the Celestial Empire, would deserve a pillory at the hands of all lovers of poetry. Yet, let us remember a unique property of opium. This is what we find under 'Opium' in a popular encyclopædia: "In the case of many temperaments, opium produces such agreeable effects, whether a delightful dreamy calm, a state of pleasant exhilaration or beautiful visions, that numbers of persons are led to use it habitually." It was this peculiar property of opium, its faculty of inducing dreams, that was glorified by De Quincey, the prince of English opium-eaters. "What I contemplated in these *Confessions*," says he, "was to emblazon the power of opium—not over bodily diseases and pain, but over the grander and more shadowy world of dreams."

This 'shadowy world of dreams' never came into the ken of poets of the eighteenth century. It was the discovery of the romantics. Prof. Elton happily describes it as the 'dream-territory of art', discovered by the pioneer minds of the romantic era, who, in their revolt from the dominion of Reason, which the 'Age of Reason and Common sense' had set up even in creative literature, were constantly straying into all the widely scattered realms of Unreason. Dream-phenomena constituted a happy hunting ground for sensations and sensibilities, of delicious pleasure as of morbid pain, which we find Crabbe trying to explore in his poem on *The World of Dreams.* It was to this world that Coleridge was introduced through the peculiar property of opium, and he brought forth out of it at least one perfect masterpiece of romantic poetry, viz., *Kubla Khan.*

Furthermore, a student of Coleridge's literary works, both prose and poetry, cannot help noticing in the general character of these works the abnormal effects of opium on the mind and the will. Coleridge's mind may be fitly described as of two chambers,—in one were stored the random speculations of psychology and metaphysics, and in the other all the shadows of fancy, the ghosts of memory, the 'glooms and glimmerings' of things half-remembered, half-imagined and half-realised. By weakening the will and the power of resolution, the influence of opium rendered his philosophical speculations singularly desultory, dissipated or loose-jointed. It also killed off like a blight his numerous literary projects—essays, treatises, disquisitions, which are solemnly promised to his expectant readers, but are never taken in hand at all. It accounts also for the curiously unfinished character of the most marvellous of his poems, *Christabel,* which was expected when finished to be a full-bodied lay, like one of Scott's, but remains only in four fragments loosely dovetailed. The *Ancient Mariner,* as Walter Pater remarks, is " the only one really finished thing in a life of many beginnings," —but, when that poem was composed by Coleridge, he was living under the sane and salutary influence of Wordsworth.

In the other chamber of his mind, the effect of opium was more subtly, and perhaps more powerfully, creative.

Will it be fantastic to trace the creative effect of opium in the poetry of Coleridge, first, in the somewhat strange complexion of its imagery, and, secondly, in its unique presentation of supernatural phenomena and experience ? Coleridge acquired from Wordsworth the faculty of nature-observation, but whoever has studied the peculiar imagery of his nature-descriptions cannot fail to be struck by the fact that they are infused with a quality unborrowed from the eye. There are magic touches of glamour added to the reality, which lend it a certain strangeness as though of something charmed and enchanted. Let us take two typical examples. First, the description of the elfin storm over the tropic sea in the *Ancient Mariner* :

> "The upper air burst into life !
> And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
> To and fro they were hurried about !
> And to and fro, and in and out,
> The wan stars danced between."

The 'fire-flags' might be sheet-lightnings and the dancing of the stars an optical illusion caused by the quick alternations of intense light and utter darkness as the lightnings flash and go out. But Wordsworth would never have envisaged the scene in this way,—here is something more than nature : it is Nature made weird, almost preternatural. Second, the description of the stripping process of Nature in the forest behind Sir Leoline's castle in *Christabel* :

> "The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
> That dances as often as dance it can,
> Hanging so light and hanging so high,
> On the topmost twig that looks up to the sky."

Here 'the last red leaf' on the tree is described, no doubt, as Wordsworth would have it, 'with the eye on the object,' but the leaf has also what may be called a 'behaviour', and it is on this that the poet concentrates, making the thing not only queer and grotesque, but also a sort of mysterious sign or signal.

Turning next to Coleridge's representation of supernatural phenomena in his poetry, we discover at once a curious quality that strongly differentiates it from the mediaeval romantic. The old romancer's set formula—'And, lo, a wonder'—is a finger-post: we are left in no doubt about the wonder and, whatever its character may be, it is a real palpable one,—a ghost or a dragon or an enchanted castle. But the 'wonders' of Coleridge are different : they are not merely vague and uncertain, but they seem to belong to a world of twilight where the keenest critical scrutiny is unable to declare whether they are real or unreal, objective things or subjective conceptions. We are left at last with Prof. Beers's futile query about the experiences of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, viz., "Did the mariner really see the spectral bark, hear spirits talking, or was it all but the fantasmagoria of the calenture which attacks the sailor on the tropic main, so that he seems to see green meadows and water-brooks on the level of brine ?"

The question naturally suggests itself—where did Coleridge get the cue for this peculiar presentation of the supernatural ? It is assuredly not in the old romances, nor in any previous treatment of the supernatural. But may not the suggestion be hazarded that he found it in his own opium-nurtured temperament,—in the confirmed opium-eater's vague uncertainties of vision and strange dubieties of experience ?

But opium did more for Coleridge than producing this subtle influence on the cast of his imagination : it led him straight into the 'world of dreams,' not all of which, however, were blessed by the Muses. Nightmarish (as described in *The Pains of Sleep*), *Outre* and grotesque, pleasant and delicious with a subtle touch of mystery about them,—all sorts of dreams seem to have been experienced by Coleridge under the spell of opium. They are scattered through his numerous diaries, note-books and memoranda, and some of them show curiously a tendency to emerge out of the opium-chrysalis into open expression. Take for example the following entry included in E. H. Coleridge's *Anima Poetae* : "Poem. Ghost of a mountain,—the forms seizing my body as I passed became realities. I, a ghost, till I had reconquered by substance." It is the cursory diary record of a grotesque and bizarre opium-dream trying somehow to expand itself into poetic expression. The dream, which Coleridge evidently had intended to work out into a poem, never found that consummation. But one such opium-dream, not so grandly grotesque indeed, yet a weird blend of open sunlight and underground darkness, of the beauties of Nature and the mysteries of the supernatural, managed to settle down through opium fumes into unmatchable verse. It was *Kubla Khan*.

The poem is in two parts. The vision of the 'sunny dome with caves of ice' is followed by the melancholy regress of the mind from it, and then the balked mind's futile casting about for the vision that has vanished. There is an internal pause, representing the gap between sleep and waking, which divides the two parts. The poem is called 'fragmentary' by the poet, but it seems complete in itself, and we hardly know whether to bless or to curse the much-abused 'man on business from Porlock' who, by detaining the poet for an hour, effectively stopped the poem where it ends now.

It is to the significance of the second part that I invite your attention for a moment. In the first the poet has somehow translated the dream-imagery into words, reducing 'things' into symbols. But in the process of passing through an alien medium the vivid reality of the dream, its glory and freshness, its deeply-felt intimacy with actual experience, has become attenuated and blurred. The poet has realised for the moment the eternal failing and regret of all poets who have to employ the medium of language which cannot catch the living reality, but only its mental shadow. So the poet yearns to come out of the bondage of words and freely rebuild, not in the abstraction of language, but in the actuality and concreteness of vision, 'that sunny dome, those caves of ice.' He knows too well that no deliberative or volitional faculty of the mind will avail him in this, but only the 'deep delight,' the creative joy, called *afflatus*, which raised poets in the anciet world to the rank of Vates. What will invoke this inspired power ? What spell ? He seeks for it in the dream-world of his own mind—

> " A damsel with a dulcimer
> In a vision once I saw :
> It was an Abyssinian maid
> And on her dulcimer she play'd,
> Singing on Mount Abora."

In this fading away of a vision and the search for a charm to rekindle it, one of the deepest spiritual experiences of a poet is at once illustrated and exemplied. Shelley sets forth this experience thus in his inimitably sublime prose :

" A man cannot say, I will compose poetry. The greatest poet even cannot say it ; for the mind in creation is as fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness ; this power arises from within like the colour of a flower that fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our nature are unprophetic either of its approach or of its departure."

In the second part of *Kubla Khan*, the poet is casting about for this 'invisible influence.' Where does his spiritual search after it lead him to ? Milton sought for the same 'invisible influence' in 'devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit' ; Wordsworth in the spiritual emanations of Nature for which he had waited so patiently in 'wise passiveness' ; Coleridge, whom the virtue of opium had established in the heart and centre of the inscrutable dream-world, naturally seeks after this 'invisible influence' in the witch-spell of a visionary dulcimer.

7. SYED MEHDI IMAM

[*The Poetry of the Invisible* which was first published in 1937 by George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, created quite a considerable sensation in the dovecotes of English Literary Criticism at that time. "The author has shown striking originality of thought and power of expression "—said Rabindranath Tagore about the volume. " I have found the book both stimulating and thought-provoking "—wrote C. F. Andrews in the Preface. " A work of high originality and beauty " —observed *The Greater World* (London) ; and, " excitingly revealing interpretation "—echoed *The Enquirer* (England.) Not withstanding these, there were many who believed that *The Poetry of the Invisible* is a mere " curious study," a rather fantastic attempt on the part of the author. The truth is that this important work of Mr. Imam presents a new stand-point respecting some of the major English poets, namely, the occult view lying hidden in great English verse. As such, it makes a serious demand upon the reader's attention and intellect.

The plan of the book is a new one in literary interpretation. The classical poets, beginning with Keats and ending with Bridges, are treated as mystics who have the power to bring from the depths of the sub-conscious mind the scenery of the unseen world. The invisible planes of spirit, the radiant body, materialisation of phantoms, telepathy, clairvoyance, astral projection, and the like phenomena are unfolded by the actual words of the great poets. A fresh light is shed on " The Testament of Beauty " and " The Dynasts." The selected poets are dealt with in three divisions. In the first are Keats, Shelley and Byron, in the second, Tennyson, Browning, and Swinburne; in the third, Abercrombie, Hardy, Charles Williams, and Bridges. In the first chapter, the author discusses the poet as seer ; in the last, poetry is seen in its intimate connection with science, the psychical theory, and with all forms of knowledge.

Mr. Imam gave a course of lectures in England on the substance of *The Poetry of the Invisible*. In India also be lectured about it in several important places like Kashmere, Lahore, Lucknow, Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. At the special request of the University of Calcutta he addressed the students and professors of that University on the same subject, and also the pupils of Santiniketan—at the invitation of Rabindranath Tagore. At the request of the All-India Radio, Calcutta, Mr. Imam gave a broadcast talk on the substance of the book. The Governments of Bihar, N.W.F. Province, U.P., C.P., and Assam recommended the purchase of the volume for all the libraries under their jurisdiction. In the present essay Mr. Imam condenses the substance of *The Poetry of the Invisible* and also answers the criticism of reviewers. Since the publication of this volume Mr. Imam has published through MacMillan & Co., Calcutta, *The Folk-lore of Ancient Greece, Scenes from Indian Mythology* and *Scenes from Islamic History.* Two works—"Meditative Utterances" and "Synthesis of Religions"—are awaiting publication. There are some books on Law also to the credit of Mr. Imam and, what is more important, several poems as well.

Mr. Syed Mehdi Imam was born at Neora (in Bihar) on the 28th of February 1902, in an old and distinguished family. His father, the late Syed Hasan Imam, was renowned all over India as one of the ablest lawyers of his time. He represented India at the League of Nations, in 1923, and presided over the session of the Indian National Congress in 1918. Mr. Imam's uncle, the late Sir Ali Imam, was Law Member to the Government of India and Prime Minister of Hyderabad State, and represented India at the first session of the League of Nations. Mr. Imam's grandfather, Nawab Imdad Imam, was a reputed poet with remarkable literary gifts. Apart from this splendid family heritage, Mr. Syed Mehdi Imam possesses high academic qualifications and cultural distinctions. He had all his early and higher education in England. He entered Lynams Preparatory School, Oxford, at the age of seven, in 1909. From there he went to Harrow which he left in 1920. From that year till 1925 he was at Oxford and took his degree in the Honours School of Classical Greats. He is the first Muslim and the fourth Indian to take this degree at Oxford in Greek and Latin. From 1925 till 1932 Mr. Imam worked with his father in leading civil and criminal cases. In 1943 he was appointed Standing Counsel to the Government of Bihar—in which capacity he is still working. Mr. Imam is young in years and young in spirits, and carries his healthy youthful enthusiasm into his work. He has an enviable passion for literary activities and cultural pursuits. What is more, he is refreshingly orignal in his approach to literary problems. *The Poetry of the Invisible* is a testimony to his wide scholarship, deep thinking, penetrating insight, intuitive understanding and interpretative power. He wields an enthusiastic, vigorous and vibrating style. Aesthetic and literary criticism may expect many more revealing things from him.]

ON "THE POETRY OF THE INVISIBLE"

The Poetry of the Invisible explains the occult insight of the major English poets from Keats to Bridges. Sri Aurobindo Ghosh wrote of the book as follows: "The book seems to me to illuminate very vividly many passages of the English poets with their inner sense which is not apparent to the ordinary reader and to bring out a strain of psychic vision which has not till now been fully appreciated in its true character."

The book was an attempt to unfold through the masters of the English language the invisible world of poetry. Hence it was called *The Poetry of the Invisible.* The search was to unify the scattered intuitions of poets into a whole in which may appear, as in a chart, an outline of the life of spirit bodied forth by the imagination of poetry. The point was not that the occult theory was necessarily true. The subject of the occult was not investigated. The point was that, be the occult theory true or untrue, the poets displayed in specific and clear words the field of the occult.

The book was divided into three parts—the first chapter, the middle chapter and the concluding chapter. In the first chapter was discussed the modern theory of matter as described by leading scientists Sir Arthur Eddington and Sir James Jeans. It was shown that according to modern science matter was considered first as consisting of solid particles called atoms. Subsequently atoms were found to be composed of solid particles called electrons and protons. Thereafter, at a later stage, scientists discovered that electrons and protons, on their being divided or split, disappeared into wave-lengths of energy and thus ceased to be material particles. In other words, matter disappeared into immateriality and thus entered into the field of the invisible world. That is to say, the visibe world of matter was associated with an invisible plane. Sir Arthur Eddington wrote in the *New Pathways in Science* : " My conclusion is that although for the most part our enquiry into the problem of experience ends in a veil of symbols, there is an immediate knowledge in the mind of conscious beings which lift the veil in places and what we discern through these openings is of a mental and spiritual nature." Sir James Jeans also stated his conclusion of the scientific view of matter as follows : " We have not seen the addition of mind to matter so much as the complete disappearance of matter, at least of the kind out of which the older physics constructed its objective universe."

The first chapter of the book explained that the poets mentally and spiritually, whether it be in the plane of imagination or reality, move in the immaterial region and express and expound in the clearest terms the plane of the occult.

The first chapter then proceeded to outline the main features of the occult theory as observed or experienced by the seers of the past as follows. The physical body, as the occult theory taught, is not the only body. It is the only visible body. From this it does not follow that beyond this visible body there are no other invisible bodies of finer and invisible matter attached to the physical body. On the contrary the physical body has within it a number of viewless bodies. Firstly attached to the physical body in the astral or subtle body. The subtle body is the exact duplication of the physical body, limb for limb, composed of a finer grade of matter unseen of the human eye. The subtle body is connected with the physical body by a chain of electrons called the astral link. Death merely means the severance of this astral link from the physical body. That is, on death the Soul breaks its astral link with the physical body and retires into the astral body. In addition to the astral body there are attached to the physical body in ever finer and finer grades of matter the mental body, the spiritual body, the formless body of the monad, till the soul reaches the plane of God where the soul is fused into the mind of God.

Corresponding to each body is a plane or sphere of activity where the body works. The physical body works in the physical plane, the astral or subtle body in the astral plane and so forth. The astral body is connected with the physical body by the astral link, the mental body is connected with the astral body by a mental link and so forth. Death on the physical plane means the severance of the astral link from the physical. Death on the astral plane means the severance of the mental link from the astral body and so forth.

The middle chapter of *The Poetry of the Invisible* tried to show that the major English poets were exhibiting in their verses, for the most part unconsciously or subconsciously, the functioning of the astral body in the astral plane, the mental body in the mental plane and so forth. Owing to the need for condensation in this essay I am not able to trace all the features of the occult theory in detail as elucidated in the book. I am therefore restricting myself chiefly to one point—the consideration of the subtle body as figured in the works of the major English poets. For a detailed unfolding of the whole subject the reader may refer to the book itself.

In *Queen Mab* Shelley describes Ianthe's soul as a subtle body being the precise duplicate of the physical body :

> " Sudden arose
> Ianthe's Soul ; it stood
> All beautiful in naked purity,
> *The perfect semblance of its bodily frame*
> Instinct with inexpressible beauty and grace."
>
> —*Queen Mab*, Part I, lines 123-127.

Ianthe's body and Soul have the same lineaments, the same marks of identity. That is, the Soul is the exact reproduction, limb for limb, of the physical body.

" 'T was a sight
Of wonder to behold the body and soul,
The *self-same lineaments*, the same
Marks of identity were there."
—*Queen Mab*, Part I, lines 137-140.

Tennyson describes the astral links—a link of some tight chain concealed in the inmost frame of the physical body being ruptured or riven in twain :

" Then it seem'd as tho' *a link*
Of some tight chain within my *inmost frame*
Was riven in twain : that life I heeded not
Flow'd from me, and the darkness of the grave,
The darkness of the grave, and utter night,
Did swallow up my vision."
—*The Lover's Tale*, Part I, lines 596-601.

Swinburne intuites the subtle body as the body spiritual :

" And alway through new act and passion new
Shines the *divine same body* and beauty through,
The *body spiritual* of fire and light
That is to worldly noon as noon to night."
—*Tristram and Iseult*, Vol. ii, lines 7-10.

Abercrombie in the *Death of a Friar* describes the experience of a dying man awakening in the full health of a subtle body, the correct subtle body being expressly used :

" As if his flesh were all new exquisite sense
Assuming a divine experience,
Health was the thing he knew, health quick and beating.
Fine as a mind strange radiant beauty greeting,
His *subtle body* knew his health, and made
Bodily joy of it."
—*The Death of a Friar*, lines 111-116.

Charles Williams speaks of two lovers meeting in the true body, that is the subtle body beyond space where perfect matter is told :

" In the *true Body*,
Lo, your true face
Looked to behold me,
There, beyond space :
O, was an ending to dream !

Robert Browning describes the three bodies as three Souls with bodily parts. First is the physical body—the body that acts and has the use of earth and ends the man downward—that is the body at the physical level.

" Three souls which make up one soul : first, to wit
A soul of each and all the bodily parts,

Seated therein, which works, and is what Does.
And has the use of earth, and ends the man downward."

—*A Death in the Desert*, Vol. i, lines 84-88.

Concealed in finer matter, "growing and grown into," that is interpenetrating physical matter and invisible to physical sight, is the next soul which feels, thinks, wills and knows :

"But, tending upward for advice,
Grows into, and again is grown into
By the next soul, which, seated in the brain,
Useth the first with its collected use,
And feeleth, thinketh, willeth,—is what knows."

—*A Death in the Desert*, Vol. i, lines 88-92.

Lying in still rarer matter, is the soul which uses both the lower bodies. This is the mental body of occultism :

"Which, duly tending upward in its turn,
Grows into, and again is grown into
By the last soul, that uses both the first,
Subsisting whether they assist or no,
And, constituting man's self, is what Is—
And leans upon the former, makes it play,
As that played off the first : and, tending up,
Holds, is upheld by, God, and ends the man
Upward in that dread point of intercourse,
Nor needs a place, for it returns to Him.
What Does, what Knows, what Is ; three souls, one man."

—*A Death in the Desert*, Vol. i, lines 93-103.

The frame work of man is not simple. From the point of view of the invisible it is complex. The spirit of man operates three bodies—the physical, astral and mental. The physical is visible. The astral and mental are invisible, because they are formed of finer state of substance. The astral and mental bodies lie within, interpenetrating or to use the words of Browning 'grow into and again grown into' by the next soul. Beyond these soul bodies, tending upward still upheld by God, is the spirit of out-soul which ends the man upwards. "That dread point of intercourse" between God and man is the last plane where the spirit of man, the out-soul and the universal spirit meet. Browning expressly distinguishes this out-soul or spirit of man from the bodies which the out-soul controls :

"I found, one must abate
One's scorn of the soul's casing, distinct from the soul's self—
Which is the centre-drop."

—*Fifine at the Fair*, Vol. ii, Stanza CII, lines 1-3.

Robert Browning also sees the bodiless or formless state of the soul in the higher plane :

" Since, distinct above
Man's wickedness and folly, flies the wind
And floats the cloud, free transport for our soul
Out of its fleshly durance dim and low,—
Since *disembodied soul* anticipates
(Thought-borne as now, in rapturous unrestraint)
Above all crowding, crystal silentness,
Above all noise, a silver solitude."
—*Aristophanes' Apology*, Vol. i, lines 40-47.

Byron also senses the unembodied soul as a mind filling all space and becomes aware of all the stages of evolution.

"When coldness wraps this suffering clay,
Ah, whither strays the immortal mind ?
It cannot die, it cannot stay,
But leaves its darken'd dust behind.
Then, *unembodied*, doth it trace
By steps each planet's heavenly way ?
Or fill at once the realms of space,
A thing of eyes, that all survey ?"
(*When coldness wraps this suffering clay*, Stanza 1).

Abercrombie also shows in the *Death of a Friar* the dissolution of the physical, the subtle and mental bodies passing into the bodiless plane :

"Then something new and nameless : a caress
Blandishing dark and silent all the stress
Of joys intelligible, and through him sending
Blissful dissolution and an ending.
And he was free, thoughtless and *bodiless*,
Having no form, acknowledging no place :
A speed, a phantom speed for ever fleeing,
Speed the uttermost purity of being,
Speed the imperishable thing in things."
—*The Death of a Friar*, lines 233-241.

Browning sees the spirit of man evolving through the successive spiritual spheres :

" Man's poor spirit in its progress, still
Losing true life for ever and a day
Through ever trying to be and ever being—
In the evolution of successive spheres—
—*Bishop Bolugram's Apology*, Vol. i, lines 784-787.

In Tennyson the existence of the invisible world, evolution through the spheres, is proclaimed by the voices of the dead :

" The veil
Is rending, and the Voices of the day
Are heard across the voices of the dark.
No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell, for man,
But thro' the Will of One who knows and rules—
Aeonian Evolution, swift or slow,
Thro' *all the Spheres*—an ever opening height,
An ever lessening earth."

—*The Ring*, lines 26-34.

Byron sees the spirits in the Spirit Spheres :

Cain. " How the lights recede !
Where fly we ?
Lucifer. To the world of phantoms, which
Are being's past, and shadows still to come."

—*Cain,* Act II, Scene 1.

In *Queen Mab* Shelley correctly defines the invisible world as a sensitive extension of the physical state—a definition as accurate as a scientist or occultist could define :

" A shrine is raised to thee
Which, nor the tempest breath of time,
Nor the interminable flood,
Over earth's slight pageant rolling,
Availeth to destroy,—
The *sensitive extension* of the world.
That wondrous and eternal fane,
Where pain and pleasure, good and evil join."

—*Queen Mab,* Part VI, last 9 lines.

From the above quotations it is apparent that the intuitions of the poets, so different in temperament as Shelley, Tennyson, Browning and others, point in their verses to (a) the existence of the subtle body and other invisible bodies (b) the existence of a bodiless state of the soul (c) the existence of invisible worlds, the sensitive extension of the physical state through which the soul evolves upward to God.

My point was not and is not that the occult theory is true or false. My point is not and was not that the common intuitions of the poets sensing the same features of invisible worlds formed a kind of science of the Invisible. The existence or non-existence of future psychical states is a matter of psychical investigtion. Nor is a poet a scientist. I said in the first chapter of *The Poetry of the Invisible* : " where science ends poetry begins." My point was one and one alone—that the poets in the higher flights of inspiration are in touch with an immaterial region of the mind, be that real or be that imaginary. There was no issue in the book as to whether the immaterial world was real or imaginary. Perhaps the real world is the production of the imagination or perhaps the imgaination is the production of some real world unknown to man. That was a matter foreign to the consideration of the book. Whatever may have been the questions of controversy raised by the reviews of *The Poetry of the Invisible* in England and India, it is to me evident— still evident and still proved by the definite verses of the major English poets—that the poet is psychically sensitive to some immaterial region of the mind lying outside the physical vision or the physical senses—a region, as Shelley phrases, instinct with inexpressible grace and beauty.

8. AMARANATHA JHA

[Almost as a rule, great fathers do not have great sons! It seems to be one of Life's inescapable major ironies. In our country the truth of this is more piognantly illustrated than perhaps in other lands. The two instances that come prominently to the mind as an exception to the general rule are to be found in the Nehru family and the Jha family—both of Allahabad. Who has not heard of the late Pandit Motilal Nehru and the late Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Sir Ganganatha Jha—one a leader in Law and Politics, the other, a stalwart in scholarship and education? And who has not heard of their illustrious sons—Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Pandit Amaranatha Jha—who are both following in the hallowed footsteps of their distinguished sires and continuing the traditions established by them? And it is curious to contemplate how both these Pandits received from their great fathers, almost as a paternal legacy, part at least of their present distinction. Pandit Jawaharlal received the crown of Congress Presidentship in December 1929 from his father who had presided over the Congress session the previous year. And Dr. Amaranatha Jha succeeded his father as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Allahabad in 1938.

Born at Darbhanga on February 25, 1897, Pandit Jha had his early education at the Government High School, Allahabad. He passed the B.A. and M.A. examinations, in 1917 and 1919 respectively, of the Allahabad University—standing First in the University in both the examinations. For some years he worked as Professor of English at the Muir Central College, Allahabad, and in 1929 was appointed University Professor. 1934 was a year of crowded honours for Pandit Jha. In that year he was elected as the Dean of the Faculty of Arts of the Allahabad University; was appointed member of the Committee of Experts on the education of Youth, League of Nations; and he became the Vice-President of the Poetry Society of London. And such honours continued to come to him in the succeeding years. In 1936 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, England,—a distinction which very few Indian writers enjoy. 1938 witnessed his installation as the Vice-Chancellor of the very University of which he was a distinguished *alumni*. In this position he still continues—having been re-elected for another term only last year. Two years back the Agra University conferred an honorary Doctorate on Pandit Jha. In 1941 he was the Chairman of the Inter-University Board of India, and a Member of the Central Advisory Board of Education. During the last few years he has also presided over the All-India Educational Conference, the All-India Hindu Sahitya Sammelan, All-India Adult Education Conference, Maithili Parishad and such other conferences. He has also delivered Convocation Addresses at Allahabad, Agra, Bombay, Mysore and Patna.

However, what is more conspicuous and important in Dr. Jha is his contribution to literature. Well-versed in Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu and English literatures, he has an astonishing fund of sound scholarship which he makes use of in his writings with admirable naturalness and felicity. With his long experience as Professor of English in one of the best universities in India, Dr. Jha has contributed his valuable share to Indo-English criticism. His critical editions of *The Merchant of Venice* and *Hamlet* have an individuality of their own. His essays in *Shakespearean Comedy* are an evidence of his vast study, original thinking, critical faculty and facile expression. His *Occasional Essays and Addresses* and *Literary Studies*—reveal the same characteristics in ample measure. It is a pity that scholars like him are compelled by circumstances to take up administrative posts where the atmosphere is not congenial for creative work and literary pursuits. Indo-English Literature looks up to Dr. Jha to return to its fold with renewed vigour when he lays aside the Vice-Chancellor's mantle from his shoulders. And I have no hesitation in believing that his cumulative contribution to literature will indeed be signal!

In the essay reproduced below Dr. Jha writes with refreshing freshness on a much misunderstood poet—rescuing him from prejudices and restoring him to his proper place in the pantheon of English literature. When the Jingo and the Blimp in Kipling are forgotten, the poet in him, the poet that wrote *If*—and that expressed the radiant humility in *Recessional*, will long be remembered. Well and rightly has Humbert Wolfe immortalized him:

> The tin-can politics of Rudyard
> rust in some tooting brick and mudyard;
> while, through the sacred brushwood rippling,
> glimmers the faun that gods call Kipling.]

KIPLING AS POET

Jingoism, a blustering, bragging manner, plentiful use of slang, broad humour, an incomplete quotation, all these have combined to prevent, in India at any rate, Kipling from occupying a high place among English poets. He is condemned as being anti-Indian by many who have not read his works. I shall say nothing here of his short stories or of his novels ; I shall confine my attention to his verse, and make an attempt to estimate its real worth.

Rudyard Kipling has been unfortunate in belonging to the generation to which he belongs. His poetic career began while Tennyson's mellifluous voice was still heard and Browning's verse was emerging from the obscurity of more than twenty years. Tennyson had become a legend : to make yourself a Tennysonian was to be on the side of grace, and Browningism was fast developing into a creed. Silently and subtly, but surely, Fitzgerald was beginning to cast his spell: the half-sceptical melancholy, the vague longing to escape from a world that yet was lovely, made the Persian Omar an English classic. Coming close after were the striking figures of William Morris, Swinburne, and Meredith. Mediæval romance, passion at white-heat, 'chaos illumined by lightning'; enchanted names and scenes, fervent enthusiasm for liberty in all its forms and shapes and hues; blend of psychology and imagination; these held public attention for a few years. Then, when Kipling might have been expected to come into his own, appeared on the horizon the meteoric figure of Oscar Wilde, half genius, half poltroon, the mystic Francis Thompson with his vision of 'a deep, but dazzling darkness,' Symonds with his wide humanism, the exuberant Le Gallienne. Condemn the 'nineties' as we may, decadent, aesthetic, cloying, characterise it as we like, while it flourished, nineties' verse allowed no other note to become audible. A. E. Housman attempted to break the charm: but in vain. 'A Shropshire Lad,' with its deep-seated and therefore quiet pessimism, its profound melancholy, its absence of enthusiasm, had to wait for more than twenty years for recognition. He sang before his due time of the laurels that were all cut; of the world grown old; of the heart that's sold for endless rue; of lads that have had no luck at all. By the time these had had their day, and another race was to come, the venerable figure of Thomas Hardy, like some Ancient of Days, moved into the realms of poetry, singing of the cruelty of time, of callous nature, of helpless humanity, of God's funeral. Soon came the war and the war-poets with their brief existence brightened with the gleam of fame—Rupert Brooke, Ralph Hodgson, Julian Grenfell, Edmund Blunden, S. Sassoon, Robert Graves—who, passing through tears and famine and flame, severance and shock, saw yet the vision glorious, the distant gates of Eden, and 'did not dream it was a dream.' Now we have the Futurists, the Imagists, the Transcendentalists. In all these years, through all the stages of English poetry during the last forty or fifty years, Kipling has been a solitary figure, singing unceasingly, rising occasionally to real poetic heights, but without receiving the meed of serious recognition. He has not attained the position which is his due.

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Kipling's poetic work falls into three main divisions: those dealing with Anglo-India; those relating to the services; and those on general themes. It will readily appear that on subjects such as these—that do not give much scope either to the imagination or to thought—verse cannot be expected to sound the abysmal deeps of personality ; feeling cannot be very intimate and thrilling. These limitations are inherent, and they must constantly be kept in view. It will be futile to expect in Kipling the mystic vision of Dante's *Inferno* ; we shall listen in vain to the awful notes of *Othello* or *Lear* ; the heroic chords of Milton's verse will not be sounded ; nor can we expect the melting romance of Spenser . His poems will inevitably be matter-of-fact, practical, business-like ; they will treat of familiar matter of to-day ; they will not imagine so much as observe. There will be room, indeed, for humour, for pathos, for tears ; they will be a leaf out of the book of life. They will not be tinted with the rainbow hues of the sky, nor will they echo the roar of the thunder. They will describe earthly life, with all its many aches and its ecstasies. And if in dealing with reality the poet can ever and anon have a vision of glory, to that extent will he succeed in lifting poetry from the level of historical narrative. If he sees romance in the streets and beauty in the barracks, he is a genuine poet. A great man had a melancholy friend in distress who told him in surprise that, in spite of his troubles, cheerfulness kept breaking in. So for the true seer beauty and loveliness never pass away ; the dirt and the dross, the squalor and the smoke, all conceal the mystic wonder which the poet both discovers and interprets. But because of the materials Kipling uses, the atmosphere he creates, the environment in which he works, emotional intensity or concentration is not possible.

The simple art of
        " Strew on her roses, roses " ;
the energy of
                " There was a sound of revelry by night " ;
the deep-rooted dejection of
        " A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear " ;
the abandon of ... ..
        " Drink to me only with thine eyes " ;
the appeal of Kent's
        "Vex not his ghost,"
or of Othello's last speech, or the marvel of Hamlet's
        " The rest is silence "—

these are achievements beyond the range of the singer who keeps his eyes on the ground. Nor have we any right to expect him to soar thus high : his aim is different.

Before I deal with the content of Kipling's work, I may say a word on his style. Wordsworth had rebelled against the inane phraseology of the classicists and had preached a doctrine that led Byron to describe him as one

> " Who both by example and by precept shows
> That prose is verse and verse is merely prose."

Coleridge had used, in his best pieces, simple language, but how marvellously did he use it :

> "Alone, alone, all, all alone,
> Alone on a wide, wide sea."

Shelley was not particularly influenced by this revolt against poetic diction, but Byron, in *Don Juan* and *Vision of Judgment*, was able to demonstrate that poetic diction was not essential to great poetry, that ordinary expressions could be made to do duty, that vulgar and slang words could find place in verses of great poetic excellence, and that triviality of phrase and sublimity of thought could be blended together.

> " As he drew near, he gazed upon the gate
> Ne'er to be entered more by him or Sin,
> With such a glance of supernatural hate,
> As made Saint Peter wish himself within ;
> He pottered with his keys at a great rate,
> And sweated through his apostolic skin :
> Of course his perspiration was but ichor,
> Or some such other spiritual liquor."

But soon came Tennyson with his verses faultily faultless, sweet and rounded ; and then Swinburne even more perfect in phrasing. The Victorian tradition was thus one of correct, formal, careful expression. Matthew Arnold was its great prose phrase-coiner. Words regained once more their lost importance : phrase became once again a matter of moment. Browning, it is true, was an exception ; but even he was capable of such exquisite lines as :

> " That's the wise thrush : he sings each song twice over,
> Lest you should think he never could re-capture
> Te first fine careless rapture."

On the whole, however, he was a rebel, writing a passage like the following from *Pompilia* :

> " I spent a good half-hour, paced to and fro
> The garden ; just to leave her free awhile....
> I might have sat beside her on the bench.
> Where the children were : I wish the thing had been,
> Indeed : the event could not be worse, you know :
> One more half-hour of her saved ! She's dead now, sirs !"

or the following from *Too Late* :

"I liked that way you had with your curls,
Wound to a ball in a net behind :
Your cheek was chaste as a quaker-girl's,
And your mouth—there was never, to my mind,
Such a funny mouth, for it would not shut ;
And the dented chin, too—what a chin !
There were certain ways when you spoke, some words
That you know you never could pronounce :
You were thin, however ; like a bird's
Your hand seemed—some would say, the pounce
Of a scaly-fooled hawk,—all but !
The world was right when it called you thin."

The heritage of Victorian poetry continued, despite Browning's example, to be purity, lusciousness, choiceness of phraseology, and when Kipling began writing his manner seemed jarring, harsh and crude. The 'decadents' made style yet more exquisite, and Kipling was regarded as a rude rhymer not worthy to be classed with such 'precious' artists as the contributors to the Yellow-Book. Kipling did employ many cockney expressions, many phrases known to the Tommy alone and only heard in his Barracks, many words which none but Anglo-Indians could understand ; he took great liberties with spelling ; he manipulated pronunciation ; he used an aggravatingly large number of abbreviations. His punctuation was haphazard. And all this cost him heavily ; he suffered grievously for his mannerisms. Now that the Georgians have been responsible for greater excesses, have made verse totally 'free', have bid goodbye to grammar and idiom, Kipling is thought to be old-fashioned. But it is worth while observing that of the singing ballad, written in dialect, no one is a greater master. Has he not been called the Apollo of the Banjo ?

* * * * * * *

Kipling's early career was in India, at Allahabad and Lahore. From my room in the University I can see the office where he worked in the Eighties and I sometimes see in imagination the young, bushy-browed, bespectacled young assistant sitting at his table, editing telegrams, reading blue-books, writing editorial notes, and then lost in thought, abstracting himself to the world of Kim and the Zamzamma. No English poet has written of India with such intimate knowledge. Politics, religion, civil life, —every aspect is touched by him, and according to the mood of the moment, touched with laughter or irony or tears. Even in the most boisterous and frivolous pieces the eternal note of sadness can be detected, and if it is sometimes difficult to tell on which side his own sympathies are, is that not true of most great poets ?

The Indian poems deal either with some early legends, or some aspect of modern life, or else with Anglo-Indian administration. Some of the pieces belonging to the first category are perfectly delightful. What Hindu child has not heard from the lips of a grandmother or an old maid of stories related by Shiva to Parvati and hundreds of moral conundrums offered by her to him for solution ? Here, in Kipling, is one entitled *Shiva and the Grasshopper* :

" Shiv, who poured the harvest and made the winds to blow,
Sitting at the doorways of a day of long ago,
Gave to each his portion, food and toil and fate,
From the King upon his *guddee* to the Beggar at the gate.

All things made he—Shiva the Preserver.
Mahadeo ! Mahadeo ! He made all,—
Thorn for the camel, fodder for the kine,
And Mother's heart for sleepy head, O little Son of mine !

Wheat he gave to rich folk, millet to the poor,
Broken scraps for holy men that beg from door to door ;
Cattle to the tiger, carrion to the kite,
And rags and bones to wicked wolves without the wall at night.
Naught he found too lofty, none he saw too low—
Parvati beside him watched them come and go ;
Thought to cheat her husband, turning Shiv to jest—
Stole the little grasshopper and hid it in her breast.

So she tricked him, Shiva the Preserver.
Mahadeo ! Mahadeo, turn and see !
Tall are the camels, heavy are the kine.
But this was Least of little things, O little Son of mine !

When the dole was ended, laughingly she said,
' Master, of a million mouths is not one unfed ?'
Laughing, Shiv made answer, ' All have had their part,
Even he, the little one, hidden neath thy heart.'
From her breast she plucked it, Parvati the thief,
Saw the Least of Little things, gnawed a new-green leaf !
Saw and feared and wondered, making prayer to Shiv,
Who hath surely given meat to all that live !

All things made he—Shiva the Preserver.
Mahadeo ! Mahadeo ! He made all,—
Thorn for the camel, fodder for the kine,
And mother's heart for sleepy head, O little Son of mine !"

Or, take next, *A Song of Kabir* :

> "Oh, light as the world that he weighed in his hands !
> Oh, heavy the tale of his fiefs and his lands !
> He has gone form the *guddee* and put on the shroud,
> And departed in guise of *bairagi* avowed !
>
> Now the white road to Delhi is mat for his feet,
> The *Sal* and the *Kikar* must guard him from heat.
> His home is the camp, and the waste, and the crowd—
> He is seeking the way, as *bairagi* avowed !
>
> He has looked on man, and his eyeballs are clear—
> (There was One ; there is One, and but One, saith Kabir) ;
> The Red Mist of Doing has thinned to a cloud—
> He has taken the path for *bairagi* avowed !
>
> To learn and discern of his brother the clod,
> Of his brother the brute, and his brother the God,
> He has taken the path for *bairagi* avowed !
> ('Can ye hear ?' saith Kabir), a *bairagi* avowed !"

These two poems are enough to show how thoroughly Kipling has entered into the spirit of Hindu tradition and how faithfully he is able to depict the Hindu mind. The trust in an all-seeing, all-protecting God, the confidence that whatever He does is for the best, the ideal of sacrifice, of renunciation, of the lowly path of poverty, and the curious mixture of faith and fatalism—all this he has appreciated and described. One imagines some itinerant *sadhu* or mystic villager must have let him have a glimpse of these arcana.

But he is not silent about familiar matter of to-day. All that he saw around him he treasured in his memory : the small club talk, the hill exodus, the station scandals, the pettiness of the mighty and the patient heroism of the poor. The honesty of the humble, over-driven, hard-used Indian 'bearer' is brought out in the poem *Ganga Din* with its last lines :

> "Though I've belted you and flayed you,
> By the livin' Gawd that made you,
> You're a better man than I am, Ganga Din !"

The devotion and the camaraderie of the Indian soldier is the theme of the poem *The Grave of the Hundred Dead.*

The most interesting and amusing pieces are those that relate to Anglo-Indian life and administration. One of the best is *The Post that Fitted* :

> ***Though tangled and twisted the course of true love,***
> ***This ditty explains,***
> ***No tangle's so tangled it cannot imporve***
> ***If the lover has brains.***

Ere the steamer bore him Eastward, Sleary was engaged to marry
An attractive girl at Tunbridge, whom he called 'my little Carrie.'
Sleary's pay was very modest ; Sleary was the other way.
Who can cook a two-plate dinner on eight poor rupees a day?

Long he pondered o'er the question in his scantily furnished quarters—
Then proposed to Minnie Boffkin, eldest of Judge Boffkin's daughters.
Certainly an impecunious Subaltern was not a catch,
But the Boffkins knew that Minnie mightn't make another match.

So they recognised the business and, to feed and clothe the bride,
Got him made Something, Something somewhere on the Bombay side.
Anyhow, the billet carried pay enough for him to marry—
As the artless Sleary put it : "Just the thing for me and Carrie."

Did he, therefore, jilt Miss Boffkin,—impulse of a baser mind?
No ! He started epileptic fits of an appalling kind.
[Of his *modus operandi* only this much I could gather :—
"Pears's shaving sticks will give you little taste and lots of lather."]

Frequently in public places his affliction used to smite
Sleary with distressing vigour—always in the Boffkins' sight.
Ere a week was over Minnie weepingly returned his ring,
Told him his "unhappy weakness" stopped all thought of marrying.

Sleary bore the information with a chastened holy joy,—
Epileptic fits don't matter in Political employ,—
Wired three short words to Carrie—took his ticket, packed his kit
Bade farewell to Minnie Boffkin in one last, long, lingering fit.

Four weeks later, Carrie Sleary read—and laughed until she wept,
Mrs. Boffkin's warning letter on the "wretched epilept"....
Year by year, in pious patience, vengeful Mrs. Boffkin sits
Waiting for the Sleary babies to develop Sleary's fits."

The next poem, that in these days of retrenchment has a topical flavour, deals with Sir Auckland Colvin, and is entitled "The Rupaiyat of Omar Kal 'Vin" : a brilliant parody, full of wit and delicate irony. Indeed, many of the Anglo-Indian verses are marked by these two qualities.

* * * * *

No English poet, I think, is more popular in the Army than Kipling. I have myself heard several poems of his quoted with enthusiasm and gusto by Tommies in their barracks, not on ceremonial occasions and in formal recitations, but as part of their daily speech. He speaks a language that they know ; he describes things familiar to them ; more than everything, he expresses their feelings exactly as they themselves would if they had the gift of expression. The soldier all over the world appreciates kindness. He has primal impulses : be good to him, and there is nothing he will not do for you. He has chosen to join a school of hardship and iron discipline ; all that he asks for is that you will be a frank comrade to him. A little goodwill, a little gentleness, a soft word, a kind look, and he is your slave. He has no home but the barracks ; no family save the members of his section, no guide save his officer. All his loyalties are for his uniform which he will not stain and for his unit whose reputation he will not sully. Send him from East to West, he will not mind it ; put him on to any duty, he will work with a will. Yet underneath the apparent roughness and boisterousness and noise of his life there runs a current of pathos. And Kipling—in spite of the loud clang of his verse—seizes on this current of pathos and reproduces it. That is how he becomes par excellence the Soldier's Poet. He speaks of Tommy with respect and affection. The Prelude to *Barrack Room Ballads* is addressed to Thomas Atkins :

"I have made for you a song,
And it may be right or wrong,
But only you can tell me if it's true.
  I have tried for to explain
  Both your pleasure and your pain,
And, Thomas, here's my best respects to you !

  O there'll surely come a day
  When they'll give you all your pay,
And treat you as a Christian ought to do ;
  So, until that day comes round,
  Heaven keep you safe and sound,
And, Thomas, here's my best respects to you !"

I shall quote only one soldier-poem, *Tommy*, striking because of its righteous indignation :

"I went into a public—'ouse to get a pint o' beer,
The publican 'e up an' sez, 'We serve no red-coats here.'
The girls be' ind the bar they laughed an' giggled fit todie,
I outs into the street again an' to myself say I:

O it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, go away";
But it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins," when the band begins to play—
The band begins to play, my boys, the band begins to play,
O it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins," when the band begins to play.

I went into a theatre as sober as could be,
They gave a drunk civilian room, but 'adn't none for me ;
They sent me to the gallery or round the music—'alls,
But when it comes to fightin', Lord ! they'll shove me in , the stalls !

For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy wait outside" ;
But it's "Special Train for Atkins" when the Trooper's on the tide—
The troopship's on the tide, my boys, the troopship's on the tide,
O it's "Special Train for Atkins" when the trooper's on the tide.

Yes makin' mock o' uniforms that guard you while you sleep
Is cheaper than them uniforms, an' they're starvation cheap;
And huslin' drunken soldiers when they're goin' large a bit
Is five times better business than paradin' in full kit.

Then it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, 'ow's yer soul ?"
But it's "Thin red line of 'eroes" when the drums begin to roll—
The drums begin to roll, my boys, the drums begin to roll,
O it's "Thin red line of 'eroes" when the drums begin to roll.

We aren't no thin red 'eroes, nor we aren't no blackguards too,
But single men in barricks, most remarkable like you ;
An' if sometimes our conduck isn't all your fancy paints,
Why, single men in barricks don't grow into plaster saints ;

While it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' Tommy, fall be'ind,
But it's "Please to walk in front, sir," when there's trouble in the wind—
There's trouble in the wind, my boys, there's trouble in the wind,
O it's "Please to walk in front, sir," when there's trouble in the wind.

You talk o' better food for us, an' schools, an' fires, an' all :
We'll wait for extra rations if you treat us rational.
Don't mess about the cook-room slops, but prove it to our face
The Widow's uniform is not the soldier—man's disgrace.

For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Chuck him out, the brute !"
But its "Saviour of 'is country" when the guns begin to shoot ;

An' it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' anything you please ;
An' Tommy ain't a bloomin' fool—you bet that Tommy sees !"

* * * * *

Before I refer to his poems on general subjects, let me devote a few lines to the charge of 'Jingoism' so often brought against Kipling. His generation had forgotten both 'the blind hysterics of the Celt' and 'the red fool-fury of the Seine'; the memories of Chartism and the Crimean War had become dim, and the disputes between Science and Religion had been put aside. Victorianism reached its apotheosis in the two Jubilees of 1887 and 1897. Imperial expansion, material prosperity, middle class rule, Tory democracy, Indian servants standing behind the Queen, alliances of the House of Windsor with several continental reigning dynasties—all these persuaded the Englishman that God was very much in His heaven, and all was certainly well with the world. Tennyson wore a crown of light. Gladstone and Disraeli trod the political stage like giants. Huxley, Tyndall and Herbert Spencer twitched the mantle of prophets. Carlyle and Ruskin rumbled darkly, but their voice was drowned in the pæans of self-complacency. No wonder self-satisfaction was the main feature of later Victorian thought, and no wonder pride of race, consciousness of national achievements, sense of glory in membership of an Empire on which the sun never sets should characterise the literature of this generation. Not until the Boer War broke out did Jingoism receive a shock and self-questionings and searchings of the heart begin. It cannot be urged as a special criticism of Kipling that in verses treating of Imperial subjects he reveals an Imperialistic outlook. Most others at the time were similarly Imperialistic. Kipling has indeed been called 'the uonfficial M. P. for British Possessions.' The question to be asked, rather is, Is his Imperialism of an offensive kind ? And in any case the question is one more of politics than of poetry. "The Song of the Cities'; "The Houses"; "The Young Queen"—these are all stirring verses with no arrogance in them.

* * * * *

Let me finally draw attention to another kind of work which also appears in large volume in most of his publications—verses that deal with eternal verities, with fundamental problems, with the mystery and the wonder of the miracle called life, with the inscrutable ways of Providence, with the mighty living and the mightier dead. Has anyone, looking before and after, solved the riddle ? Poets and philosophers have dreamt dreams and seen visions ; preachers and professors have dogmatised ; scientists have involved themselves in yet deeper labyrinths—and we are nowhere near the light. Is there light and must we always seek, never find ? Doubt and denial ; instinct struggling against reason ; science baffling faith ; passionate devotion to the older sect : cold subservience to sunless creeds—with all this the mid-Victorian was familiar, through all these phases he had passed. And what was his momentous decision ? What was the word of the Oracle ? The most succinct expression it found in a rendering of a mediæval Persian poet :

> " Unborn Tomorrow, and Dead Yesterday—
> Why fret about them, if Today be sweet ?"

Omar Khayyam, as presented by Fitzgerald, became the Holy Book of the Victorians. His refusal to see beyond the immediate present was not, however, to satisfy the generation that was not so drunk with the sense of success and prosperity, and obstinate questionings came and came again. They could not be hushed. They were clamant for answer.

What is Kipling's answer ? I venture to think that his attitude is very like Thomas Hardy's, in the last analysis. Hardy's " God's Funeral," is one of the grimmest utterances ; but here is his " God's Education " :

> " I saw him steal the light away
> That haunted in her eye :
> It went so gently none could say
> More than that it was there one day
> And missing by-and-by.
>
> I watched her longer, and he stole
> Her lily tincts and rose ;
> All her young sprightliness of soul
> Next fell beneath his cold control,
> And disappeared like those.
>
> I asked : " Why do you serve her so ?
> Do you, for some glad day,
> Hoard these her sweets—?" He said, " Oh.
> They charm not me ; I bid Time throw
> Them carelessly away."
> Said I : " We call that cruelty—
> We, your poor mortal kind."
> He mused. " The thought is new to me.
> Forsooth, though I men's master be,
> Theirs is the teaching mind !"

What does this poem exactly mean, or a dozen others that can be selected out of Hardy ? God's helplessness or God's callousness, perhaps ; perhaps, too, a difference in the values ; perhaps pity for God or anger against Him—but ultimately perhaps a conviction that it is futile to appeal to God. He is helpless in Time's hands like the puniest and frailest of mortals. Time is the great master, relentless, mighty, elemental. Here is Kipling's poem, 1892, entitled, " The Answer " :

A rose, in tatters on the garden path,
Cried out to God and murmured 'gainst His wrath,
Because a sudden wind at twilight's hush
Had snapped her stem alone of all the bush,
And God, Who hears both sun-dried dust and sun,
Had pity, whispering to that luckless one
" Sister, in that thou sayest We did not well—
" What voices heardst thou when thy petals fell ?"
And the Rose answered, " In that evil hour
" A voice said, ' Father, wherefore falls the flower ?
" ' For lo, the very gossamers are still.' "
" And a voice answered. ' Son, by Allah's Will !' "
Then softly as a rain-mist on the sward,
Came to the Rose the Answer of the Lord :
" Sister, before We smote the Dark in twain,
" Ere yet the Stars saw one another plain,
" Time, Tide and Space, We bound unto the task
" That thou shouldst fall, and such an one should ask.'
Whereat the withered flower, all content,
Died as they die whose days are innocent ;
While he who questioned why the flower fell
Caught hold of God and saved his soul from Hell."

What is the riddle ? Is there an answer ? None, save that things happen as it is written that they shall happen, and that God must Himself, to preserve His Godhead, do as it is decreed. Small comfort, little consolation : but this is all the poet vouchsafes. More he will not tell. He says at one place : " I have told the naked stars the Grief of Man." Another poem, with a similar content, is the Prelude to " Puck of Pook's Hill " :

" Cities and Thrones and Powers
    Stand in Time's eye,
Almost as long as flowers,
    Which daily die :
But, as new buds put forth
    To glad new men,
Out of the spent and unconsidered Earth,
    The Cities rise again.

This season's Daffodil,
    She never hears,

What change, what chance, what chill,
Cut down last year's;
But with bold countenance,
And knowledge small,
Esteems her seven days' continuance
To be perpetual.

So Time that is o'er-kind
To all that be,
Ordains us e'en as blind,
As bold as she:
That in our very death,
And burial sure,
Shadow to shadow, well persuaded, saith,
'See how our works endure!'"

The spirit of the men who toil and spin and sweat and die, not because they gain but because of something within them that does not let them rest and urges them on to fresh effort and new endeavour, who go from danger to danger and greet peril with a smile, the spirit of such as these has never found better expression, not in Shelley nor in Browning, than in Kipling's "The Song of the Dead." No challenge is here, no defiance; a plain statement that yet moves more than rhetorical skill:

"We were dreamers, dreaming greatly, in the man-stifled town;
We yearned beyond the sky-line where the strange roads go down.
Came the Whisper, came the Vision, came the Power with the Need,
Till the Soul that is not man's soul was lent us to lead.
As the deer breaks—as the steer breaks—from the herd where they graze
In the faith of little children we went on our ways.
Then the wood failed—then the food failed—then the last water dried—
In the faith of little children we lay down and died.
On the sand-drift—on the veldt-side—in the fern-scrap we lay,
That our sons might follow after by the bones on the way.
Follow after—follow after! We have watered the root,
And the bud has come to blossom that ripens for fruit!
Follow after—we are waiting, by the trails that we lost,
For the sounds of many footsteps, for the tread of a host.
Follow after—follow after—for the harvest is sown:
By the bones about the wayside ye shall come to your own!"

The poet who teaches us that the game is more than the player, and the ship is more than the crew is uttering a new note to which the poor modern needs to listen. That is Kipling's main contribution. Loyalty to devotion, to duty, to the cause one holds sacred, each working for the joy of the working, each having his own lode-star, working for the Good of Things as They are—there speaks all through this poet, a compelling voice : " My speech is clean and single, I talk of common things." He gives us the tonic we need and gives it a form we understand. He speaks in the language of the common men and from their level : he is no Olympian threatening of the wrath to come, nor an Oracle on the tripod telling a tale signifying nothing. The words look trivial, but they sound true : the form is rough but conceals fine art : and more than all, the message is one to which we shall respond more and more, and feel that here is the authentic voice of our century —finding no comfort in thought of God, seeing much misery and disgrace, but withal holding to the anchor, pointing the way to Light and bidding us have hope, for some there still are that do not shame their kind, not even with that wind blowing and that tide !

9. HUMAYUN KABIR

[His name is fast becoming familiar all over the country—especially among the students and the younger generation. That is as it should be—for this distinguished professor under forty still retains the enthusiasm of youth, vigour of thought and energy of drive. As a leader of the Krishak Proja Party, as a member of the Bengal Legislative Council, and as a well-wisher of the country's progress, his nation-building activities embrace a variety of interests. In all these it is his sterling intellectual qualities that mark him out as an outstanding individual. Indeed, it is his intellectual and cultural equipment that is the most precious part of Prof. Kabir. Born in 1906, he had a highly successful academic career at the Calcutta and Oxford Universities. Once attached to the Andhra University, he is now an asset to the University of Calcutta. He has already made his mark as a man-of-letters. Poetry, criticism, fiction, journalism, philosophy, aesthetics—in all these has Prof. Kabir made his own distinctive contribution. His *Kant's "On Philosophy in General"* has received well-merited recognition from such authoritative interpreters of philosophy as Prof. Price of Oxford, Dr. Gerhard Lehmann of Berlin, Dr. Rudolf Metz of Heidelberg, and Dr. A. C. Ewing. His *Poems* (1932) and *Mahatma and Other Poems* (1944) reveal his gift for giving us "not the outward forms, but the essential quality of poetry," and for making vivid his experience even through an alien medium. Prof. Kabir's latest contribution to Indo-English literature is a work of fiction—*Men and Rivers* (1944, Hind Kitabs, Bombay)—a novel of Indian peasant life, convincingly portrayed and brilliantly written.

Prof. Kabir's contribution to aesthetic and literary criticism is also remarkable. While he has done most of his work in this branch in his own mother tongue, in English the only work standing to his credit so far is *Poetry, Monads and Society,* published by the University of Calcutta in 1941. The essays in this volume were originally The Sir George Stanley Lectures for 1941 which Prof. Kabir delivered at the University of Madras. In the three lectures the author attempts to organise and record some of his serious thoughts on the paradox of communication in poetry. He deals chiefly with the problem of reconciling the claims to uniqueness and universality which art simultaneously makes. The essay on W. B. Yeats included as an appendix in the volume illustrates the theory of poetry that Prof. Kabir develops in the three lectures. The one included here is the second in the series and deals with one of the important problems in aesthetics. With its two important characteristics of clarity of thought and lucidity of expression, the essay deepens the reader's power of critical appreciation and brightens his aesthetic enjoyment.]

POETRY KATHARSIS AND CREATIVITY

I

The utilitarian heresy about poetry and its function is difficult to kill. Denied in one form, it reasserts itself in another. The didactic theory insists that the function of the poet is to reform the world. If this is denied, it is replaced by a subtler theory which recognises that the poet, even if he does reform, does not intend to do so and is often incapable of doing so. It defines the function of the poet, not as the solution of the problems of life, but as the evocation of their consciousness in the mind of man. This is variously expressed as an enlargement of personality or a heightening of consciousness. The implication is that increased acquaintance with reality extends the range of experience and enlarges our personality. This is perhaps what Matthew Arnold intended when he spoke of poetry as educating and liberalising the emotions. Such increased acquaintance may be the result of one or both of two alternative processes : by bringing within experience elements which were formerly altogether outside its ken or by increasing the intensity of attention so that new features are discovered in what we have formerly regarded as familiar objects. The function of poetry is the achievement of this heightened consciousness. The true business of the poet is not to preach but to increase knowledge, not to dictate dogmatic rules for the conduct of life, but to make men aware of life and the world and their intricate interrelations and nexuses. Out of a better understanding, a richer and fuller life is thus made possible. But all this is merely to re-interpret the term ' instruction ' in a broader sense, and in no way avoids the difficulties of the cruder theory. Granting that the poet does seek to make men conscious about the problems of life, so do the preacher and the prophet. Wherein do their activities differ as instruction ? It may be said that the distinction lies in their respective motives. The prophet and the preacher draw our attention to the evils of life in order to move us to remedy them. The poet's function is exhausted by merely presenting them to our heightened consciousness.

We need not ask here whether such sharp division between theory and practice is possible.. In the case of the prophet and the priest, knowledge is a prepaedeutic to action. A heightened consciousness of existing evils directly leads to attempts at their removal. In the case of the poet, this heightened consciousness is an end in itself. If reforms follow from such increase in knowledge, these are by-products not consciously aimed at by the poet. This theory tries to bring back the element of disinterestedness emphasised by the assimilation of art to play. The recognition of this element marks the measure of superiority of such formulation over the cruder didactic theories of Mr. Joad or Dr. Richards. It must, however, be pointed out that even this subtler variation of the utilitarian theory fails to define with precision the function of the poet.

That the poet does, through his greater insight and sensitiveness, actually direct attention to aspects of reality hitherto unobserved need not be doubted. Yet at the same time, it does not in any way seem to be part of his function to desire to do so. This is precisely the meaning of disinterestedness of art. Even if we call it disinterested increase of knowledge, this does not sufficiently distinguish poetry from other recognised activities and processes of the human mind. In science also, we have this disinterested increase of knowledge. In poetry, there is a heightening of consciousness through depth of experience or intensity of feeling. In science, the same results are achieved through extensity of experience and large generalisation. Poetry concentrates on intrinsic feeling tone and neglects the perceptual reference of experience. External reality does not disappear but is subordinated to the subjective needs of such experience. Science concentrates on the perceptual reference and neglects the feeling tone of experience. Feeling tone does not disappear but is subordinated to the objective laws of perceived reality. There is no poetry, if the poet's feeling tone is so esoteric that it evokes no response in the mind of his audience. There is no science, if the perceptual reference is so private that no body but the scientist has access to it. A common affective world is as much the condition of poetry as a common perceptual reality is that of science. A few sur-realists may say, " Sur-realism now aims at recreating a condition which will be in no way inferior to mental derangement. Its ambition is to lead us to the edge of madness and make us feel what is going on in the magnificently disordered minds of those whom the community shuts up in asylums." No body else has sought in lunatics the greatest poets and scientists of the world.

Transcendence of privacy is therefore equally necessary for art and science. In fact, it is the obverse of their disinterestedness. It also indicates why they are both concerned with the new, with just those features of experience whose feeling tone or perceptual reference has not as yet entered into the common consciousness of man. Science attempts an enlargement of personality by a more complex insight into outer reality. Its aim is to bring within the grasp of our intellect continually increasing fields of perceptual reference. Poetry attempts a heightening of consciousness by a more intimate experience of inner reality. It discovers to our imagination an endless universe of feeling tones. Science is not interested in data which have already been explained. Poetry is not interested in experiences that have already been expressed. So far as they result in a disinterested increase of knowledge, poetry and science cannot therefore be distinguished, and with slight modification, this would apply also in the case of philosophy. A purely instructional theory of poetic function fails no less than a mere hedonistic account.

II

The Aristotelian doctrine of mimesis is perhaps the subtlest form which the utilitarian theory of art has achieved. We have already seen how Plato condemned all poetry that was imitative. In his opinion, such poetry, through the undue excitation of feelings, renders people less able to face the vicissitudes of life. In practical life, we are bound to appraise emotions by the standard of resultant action. Plato applies to poetry the same test and concludes that, judged by its effect on conduct, poetry has no right to exist. Aristotle attempted to justify poetry against Plato's attack but his thought could not fully transcend the Platonic categories. Like Plato, he also thought of art as a craft and shared with his master the belief that poetry must be justified by results. Their difference arose in the estimation of these results. Plato held that tragedy is detrimental to the practical life of the audience because it generates in them the emotions of pity and fear. Aristotle believed that tragedy made the audience better fitted to face the problems of life, for it exercised and discharged these emotions in the experienc of watching it. They therefore agree in holding that the function of the poet is to generate socially valuable emotions. They only differ in their judgment about the actual achievement of the poet.

Aristotle shared Plato's conception of the function of poetry and yet his theory shows a better understanding of its real nature. Even while he accepted the Platonic doctrine of mimesis or imitation about the nature of poetry he gave to it a new twist by defining mimesis in a novel way. For Plato, mimesis meant mimicry and hence his conclusion that art is not worthwhile. But his conclusion overlooked two facts. If art is nothing but imitation of the real, why has the world since the beginning of history continued to hold it in such esteem ? The fact that men take art seriously and look upon it as something more than a mere curiosity or an ingenious toy becomes a problem which Plato's theory cannot explain. Secondly, one may think, though wrongly, of mimesis in painting as mimicry and perhaps one may even stretch it to cover some types of poetry. But what about music or architecture or dancing in which the imitation of actual object is a negligible quantity ? The Platonic theory demands that either these be excluded from the definition of art, or mimesis be defined to mean something more than mere mimicry or even literal representation.

This was the point at which Aristotle took his departure. By assimilating poetry to music and dancing, he immediately suggests that the nature of mimesis in poetry is not and cannot be mimicry. Poetry imitates not life but a conception of life. In the words of Professor Abercrombie, " Plato took imitation to be the connection between poetry and nature which leaves quite unexplained the characteristic quality and energy of poetry (whether in verse or in prose, whether an epic or a novel). Aristotle with far finer discrimination saw that the connection effected by imitation is not between poetry and the world without, but falls wholly within the being of poetry."

Once this slight alteration in the conception of mimesis is made, it is easy for Aristotle to refute Plato's condemnation of poetry. He finds the social justification of poetry in the fact that it effects a katharsis of the emotions it arouses. What exactly Aristotle meant by katharsis we can never know. He never explains it fully and the result is that one may read into it any meaning one likes. It is useful to consider some of these interpretations and for two reasons. Apart from the intrinsic interest of some of these interpretations, such consideration helps us to realise that the function of art cannot be explained by analogy with craft. The rejection of a utilitarian interpretation of katharsis will also throw more light on the nature of mimesis and thus help us to understand the nature of art itself.

One may hold that the emotions evoked are worked out or purged in the experience of the tragedy itself. After the tragedy is over, the mind of the audience is left, not burdened with terror and pity, but lightened of them. Just as a purgative concentrates and drives out of the body its undesirable products, poetry effects the homoeopathic purgation of pity and fear by the administration of these very emotions. The tragic poet who made Athenians despondent by representing the sad fate of their fellow Hellenes in Persia was punished. This fact no doubt strengthens the argument in favour of a medical interpretation of katharsis, but it must be admitted that in the end the interpretation fails. Aristotle speaks of ecstatic music curing persons already possessed of ecstasy. But there is no real analogy between such cure and the katharsis of tragedy. Unlike ecstatic music curing an already existing ecstasy, tragedy, in order to be curative, must first procure the disease it is meant to cure. Spectators do not go into the theatre already possessed of fear, anxiety and grief. These unpleasant emotions are aroused by tragedy. Further, the audience not only goes away feeling the better for the experience but enjoys it, and to such an extent that it repeats such experience time after time.

The medical analogy thus breaks down at many points. On the one hand, medicine is not administered to a healthy person, but to one who is already afflicted with the disease. It may be argued that the medicine is in the nature of an inoculation to achieve immunity from disease. By arousing in us emotions which in real life would be unpleasantly and perhaps dangerously disturbing, tragedy prepares us to meet such situations with proper responses. But this argument fails for it overlooks the fact that we enjoy such experience. No body enjoys medicine for its own sake. Katharsis, whether it means inoculation or homoeopathic purgation, fails to account for our enjoyment of art. Again, medicine may restore health, but can hardly be regarded as a condition fŏr making us feel better than we were before the illness. Finally, it is extremely doubtful if the emotions evoked by tragedy are completely discharged in the experience. Is it not common knowledge that poetry effects a permanent refinement of the sentiments and increases both the range and acuteness of our responses ?

Nor will it do to assimilate katharsis to Freud's therapy by abreaction. As Caudwell has pointed out, " This is on the one hand an over-refinement of Aristotle and on the other a misunderstanding of what therapy by abreaction actually is. Poetic creations, like other phantasies, may be the vehicle of neurotic conflicts or complexes. But phantasy is the cloak whereby the

the 'censor' hides the unconscious complex. So far from this process being kathartic, it is the opposite according to Freud's own principles. To cure the basic complex by abreaction, the phantasy must be stripped of its disguise and the infantile and archaic kernel laid bare."

The poetic construct, according to Freud's own empirical discoveries, cannot therefore represent an abreactive therapy even for the poet. But Aristotle visualises tragedy as kathartic not only for the poet, but also for the spectators. Even if the poetic phantasy did have an abreactive effect on the poet, it is unlikely that it should do so on every spectator. It is impossible that all the members of the audience should have not only the same complex as the poet but the same associations. Empirical tests show that no two neurotics have exactly the same complex while analysis shows that the associations behind the complex are generally highly personal.

The attempt to explain katharsis by analogy with religious purification fares no better. For one thing, Aristotle—whenever he talks of katharsis—alludes to the mere fact of rousing anxiety and grief. There is never any suggestion of the purification of these emotions, nor is it clear what exactly the purification of an emotion can mean. Does it mean the isolation of a feeling by discarding all extraneous qualities and associations ? A pure feeling in this sense is a logical abstraction and can never be an experienced fact. Aristotle always speaks of pity and fear in combination. The juxtaposition itself shows that Aristotle at any rate was not thinking of a single isolated feeling. Does purification mean the diversion of feeling from all considerations of self-interest so that the feeling is enjoyed for its own sake ? If by katharsis Aristotle meant such disinterested experience of an emotion, it would enable him to explain why experiences which in real life are painful and evil become in art noble and exhilarating. Such katharsis is perhaps an essential element in all art, and it may also liberalise the emotions it evokes, but it can be called purification only by an abuse of language.

Katharsis in this sense is very similar to the submlimation of modern psycho-analysis and must yet be distinguished from it. Both result in a resolution, generally temporary and partial, of the conflict between man's instincts and his environment. In both, feelings attached to these instincts are diverted from their immediate practical objectives. But here their similarity ends. In katharsis, this diversion takes place without any deliberate or conscious planning on the part of the agent. In sublimation, it need not be unconscious. In sublimation, there is an element of escapism. It is an adaptation of instinct to environment, but in the adaptation the nature of the instinct is disguised or even distorted. Further, the feeling accompanying the instinct is switched to some new objective and is not self-contained. In the katharsis of art there is no escapism. The contradiction between the instincts and the environment is solved, not by switching off the emotions into some new channel, but by insulating them from all contact with the environment itself. Hence the emotion becomes its own objective and neither requires not permits any distortion. In sublimation, there may be an element of chance but the perfect interrelation of elements in art is the result of a creative effort. Hence, sublimation may be noble and unselfish, but cannot be disinterested. The katharsis of art need not be unselfish or noble, but it is disinterested.

This conception of katharsis would also explain why even the ugly and the imperfect can be the object of art. Mimesis is seen to be not a mimicry of life, but an expression of the imagination. A feeling tone of experience is seized on by the mind of the poet. Detached from its relations with practical life, it is enjoyed for its own sake. This imaginative enjoyment, not practical utilisation, is what is expressed in art. In actual life, any object of which we are aware calls into action, often without our being conscious of it, a set of instinctive reactions and their accompanying emotions. Thus the sight of a mad dog produces in us—generally without our conscious interference—the emotion of fear and the tendency to run away. But in imaginative life, the conative part of our reaction to sensation is cut out. The result is that the emotional and perceptual aspects of the experience are apprehended much more clearly than in normal practical life. We become "true spectators, not selecting what we will see, but seeing everything equally, and thereby we come to notice a number of appearances and relation of appearances, which would have escaped our notice before, owing to that perpetual economising by selection of what impressions we will assimilate, which in life we perform by unconscious processes." It is this vision of the whole, not of elements necessary for the requirements of practical life, that art seeks to express. In one sense, it is imitation of the real, but in another sense it is not. Our perception of the real is always selective and determined by the necessities of existence. Artistic vision transcends such utilitarian selection of the real.

Aristotle's doctrine of mimesis and katharsis, on the interpretation suggested above, indicates freedom and disinterestedness as the essence of art. Such mimesis expresses our imaginative vision, the experience of an event complete in itself and undistorted by the demands of conformity to practical needs. History which relates what has actually happened has neither beginning nor end. We can never exhaust all the antecedents or consequents of any single event. Hence, an element of irrationality or chance must remain in our historical representation of facts. It is this element Aristotle has in mind when he talks of poetry as a nobler and more philosophical thing than history. In the mimesis of art, every element is in a focus of relationship with everything else in it. That is why in art we get, "not merely a flashing accidental moment of unified experience, but a prolonged continuous series of moments securely and infallibly organising their own perfect system of interrelationship, and thereby manifesting the only significance which is absolutely necessary to our minds,—the revelation of law and order in things."

The function of mimesis is to give to experience this significance. As we have already seen, it is an imitation, not of actual life, but of the imagination of life. The analogy of this with children's play is also evident, for children when left to themselves never indulge in mere mimicry of what they see. Their activity consists in expressing the mental images that make up their own imaginative life. Katharsis also is seen, not as a therapeutic device, whether by purgation, abrecation or inoculation, nor as a religious purification, nor a psycho-analytical sublimation. It is seen to be the counterpart to mimesis—the enjoyment of experience for its own sake and uninfluenced by the necessity of any responsive action. Conscious experience is itself pleasant, and to gain experience simply as such is a great gain in pleasure. When the experience is significant, it is a greater gain. Mimesis provides us with vivid imagination of significant experience and katharsis is our ability to withhold the act at the height of energy and enjoy experience for its own sake.

Such interpretation of mimesis and katharsis would take Aristotle's theory of art outside the utilitarian heresy. It would also liberate art from craft. It is, however, difficult to hold that this was Aristotle's intention for, in the end, he justifies poetry by social utility. Like Plato, he judges poetry by the effect of the emotions aroused by art in the purposes of actual life, though unlike Plato he holds this effect to be salutary and valuable. Whether valuable or not, such theory errs fundamentally in its attitude towards the nature and function of art. This can be seen most clearly in Tolstoy whose position may be regarded as a *reductio ad absurdum* of attempts to regard poetry as a guide to action. Tolstoy in modern times uses the Platonic-Aristotelian test and with results that are disastrous. His attempt to judge art by its moral efficacy leads him to condemn the whole of Michael Angelo, Raphael and Titian and most of Beethoven, not to mention nearly everything he has himself written, as bad or false art. In the end, he is forced to admit that examples of morally desirable, and therefore good art, are to be found for the most part amongst works of inferior quality. He does not, however, see that this is a tacit admission that art must be judged by some standard other than morality. A work of art cannot be judged by its reaction on life or its practical efficacy. But this is a truth which neither Aristotle nor Plato nor Tolstoy could see on account of their utilitarian bias. We have also seen the straits to which Dr. Richards, in spite of all his love of poetry, has been brought by this prejudice in favour of poetry's practical value.

III

The function of a thing is its nature considered dynamically. Hence, the discovery of the nature of poetry would simultaneoously define its function. The first step towards such discovery must be an attempt to distinguish poetry from other types of human experience. We have already seen that it is an activity and further that it is a disinterested activity. It is activity undirected towards any definite or set objective. We have also seen that this is a characteristic which it shares with science and a great deal of ordinary cognitive experience. The world would be a dismal place indeed if no body ever did anything except for some set or preconceived end. We may well ask how this end itself is to be determined. It is not enough to say that the end is determined by the struggle for existence, for this would pre-suppose the desire to survive. Lfe is not therefore merely an adaptation to stimuli received from outside. It is also a reservoir of stimuli that go out and seek the environment for adapting it to its own uses. As Max Eastman puts it, " We are not merely trying to adapt ousrelves in order to stay alive but we are trying even more energetically to live. Everything we do and think is not a reaction, a great deal of it is action....

We do things not only because we have a sensation but also in order to make a sensation. And so do the most elementary organisms. Any rubber ball can react but it requires life to act. And life does act. It seeks experience."

Disinterestedness or absence of conscious purpose cannot therefore differentiate poetry from science or ordinary cognitive experience with sufficient distinctness. One difference between them is, however, evident to even a superficial analysis. Whatever be the relation of the knower to the known, scientific and ordinary cognitive experience both assume that the object of knowledge was there waiting to be discovered. In poetic experience, the object is the product of creative imagination and this in a sense different from that of the other instances. Ordinary cognitive consciousness assumes the independent pre-existence of the objects of knowledge. It further assumes that the nature of these objects is exactly what such consciousness assumes it to be. This is the point of view of commensense, but reflection on the inter-relations of objects soon disturbs the equanimity of commonsense. The scientific point of view emerges. Like commonsense, it holds that the object of knowledge has an independent pre-existence. Unlike commonsense, it does not identify the nature of the object with what is revealed in ordinary experience. The scientific point of view is also not free from dogmatism, though in recent years the uncertainties of physics has made it more humble than before. In a word, for both commonsense and the scientific point of view thought is intentional. It refers to and is governed by the nature and content of thought. Poetic thought, if thought it can be called, is on the contrary creative. It brings into being objects which, however independent they may be once they have come into existence, could not have existed at all but for the activity of the poet. In fact, one may go even further and hold that the object of poetic experience requires for its existence not only the activity of the poet but also that of his audience. But this must await further explication.

It might no doubt be argued that knowledge, scientific or empirical, equally presupposes the activity of the knower. But there is one important difference. The presupposition of all scientific and empirical knowledge is that in such cases the object is independent of and distinct from the activity by which it is apprehended. The nature of the object determines the mind and resists all attempts of the mind to alter or change it. But in the case of poetic experience there is no such immutable law. There is no doubt a logic of development in the sphere of poetry as well, but this logic does not confine us to one sole alternative out of a set. Truth is only one, but beauty may have various forms. We know or do not know the truth about a thing and in either case there is an end of the matter. But in spite of formal finality, there is no such absoluteness about the beauty of a thing. We may each find it beautiful in our own way and the same person may find it beautiful in different ways at different times. How otherwise can one explain the appreciation of Wordsworth's Lucy poems or Shelley's West Wind by persons of tender age as well as those who are mature in experience and thought? The case of Shakespeare is an even more glaring instance. We can imagine a poem or a picture as otherwise from what it is and yet beautiful. It is only those who have neither experience nor comprehension of art that clamour about the inevitability of a line or a word or a note. It certainly is inevitable in that painting, poem or music. But all artists know that it might have been different and yet the work would remain a work of art, though naturally a different work of art.

Here then we have a clue to the function of the poet,—to create in a sense altogether different from all other human activities. Though an element of creation is involved even in the lowest forms of human perception, the creation of the poet is distinguished by freedom and fluidity. If this distinction is denied, poetry has to face the risk of collapse back into life. One may agree with Coleridge that the secondary imagination gives us, not only poetry in the limited sense with which literary critics concern themselves, but all those other aspects of the world which invest it with beauty, love and awe. Every awareness for which a civilised life is preferred by us to an uncivilised may be the result of the activity of the imagination. But this only points to a fact which has been obvious at least since the days of Kant. There can be no experience without the operation of imagination a blind but indispensable faculty of the mind. We may even hold with Dr. Richards that all objects " which we can name or otherwise single out—the simplest objects of the senses and the most recondite entities that speculation can conjecture, the most abstract constructions of the intellect and the most concrete aims of passion—alike are projections of man's interest." We realise in despair that the very generality of Imagination's creative power in these activities points to its futility as a principle for defining poetry.

The definition of the function of the poet as creativity has therefore to be further developed and amplified. The poet cannot and does not create something out of nothing. The matter of poetic creation is supplied by the crude experience of day to day. This again brings out the similarity of poetic to cognitive experiences. It becomes necessary to explain in what way objective presentation to the mind by an act of creative imagination distinguishes the content of poetry from that of cognition. By poetic creation we do not mean merely the construction of the non-existent or the non-experienced. Even if it be possible to mistake such construction as an act of creative imagination, it is not possible to regard the result as an objective presentation. Still less can poetic creation mean the embodiment of something which is impossible of realisation in the actual world. That which is impossible would not only be incapable of objective presentation, it would also violate the fundamental unity of art which is derived from and a reflection of the unity of all experience. These are mountains which even poetic faith cannot move. There is room in art for the unusual or even the unlikely, but not for the impossible. Where the unlikely occurs in poetry, such occurrence does not constitute its poetic character. It is poetry not on account of, but in spite of the unlikelihood contained in it.

Equally, poetic creation cannot be the mere reflection of what we regard as the actual. This might be objective presentation but would not be an act of creative imagination. Apart from the difficulties of defining the actual, such an attitude would lack in the disinterestedness which is an essential element in art. Clive Bell may be guilty of exaggeration when he says, " the representative element can do the picture no good and it may do it harm," but there is undoubtedly an element of truth in the remark. Emphasis on the representative element would call out one or both of two types of mental attitudes. Verisimilitude tends to evoke conative responses and includes a practical attitude of the mind. The tendency to run away from a mad dog in real life is immediate. A sufficiently accurate representation would produce the same effect. The fright of small children before the painting or still more the cinematographic representation of a tiger further illustrates this. Verisimilitude also calls into being an intellectual judgment, a comparison of the representation with its original. This immediately emphasises the cognitive aspects of the experience and destroys its disinterestedness and freedom. In brief, poetic creation is neither a hypostasis of the unreal nor an image of the actual in a mental looking-glass.

The differentia of poetic imagination, we suggested earlier, is freedom and fluidity. Its fluidity is in fact, a corollary to its freedom. The practical attitude of the mind is not free. It is dominated by immediate purposes which must be fulfilled in the real world. Its freedom is therefore limited in two directions. The purposes are either the expression of a blind instinctive drive as in the case of satisfaction of hunger and sex or the projection in the individual mind of common social ideals. In either case, the fundamental fact about them is biologic or social casuality. This holds even when the purpose expresses itself as a result against the existing social standards. The element of compulsion in the practical attitude is not, however, confined only to the subjective. The compulsion of the objective world of perceptual reference is still more insistent. Our purposes come up against the obstacles set up by the objective world, and can be satisfied only so far as the nature of the objective allows. Adaptation of the self to the real or of the real to the self are merely the opposed aspects of this compulsion of the objective.

The practical attitude of the mind is therefore doubly unfree. But the same thing applies also to the judgment of the intellect. In cognition, whether of science or of commonsense, thought, as we have already seen, is intentional. It refers to, and is governed by, the nature of the content of thought. This in itself brings an element of compulsion into all thought activities. The compulsion of thought naturally raises a problem of belief. Belief suggests the practical attitude and all that it connotes. But even if the implications of practice be ignored, the problem of belief reveals the all-pervasive character of compulsion in thought. The indifference of the nature of its content is a necessary but not an adequate presupposition of thought. There must be the further assumption that this content is an element in a continuous system which is equally indifferent to the activity of our thought. A hallucinatory object is a content of thought and seems indifferent to its activity. It does not, however, belong to a system of intentional thought and is therefore rejected as hallucinatory. The compulsion of the content of thought in its isolation is expressed in the law of identity, its compulsion as an element in a system by the law of uniformity of Nature.

In both the cognitive and the conative attitudes, the imagination is therefore unfree. It is dominated by the nature of perceptual reality whose awareness is the beginning of experience.

Further, the element of compulsion is in both cases derived from the presupposition of the systematic character of this perceptual world. In both, we seem to face a rigid and closed universe which has an independent life of its own. Cognition and conation are both attempts to share in that life, but in order to do so, we must obey its laws. These laws are the expression of the nature of the system itself. From the cognitive or the conative point of view, an element revealed in experience is not merely itself, but is tied by invisible chains with the rest of the real world. Such experience is therefore never complete or autonomous, and has neither beginning nor end. Every event is related to infinite antecedents and infinite consequences.

Poetry achieves freedom and fluidity by its liberation from the chain of endless causality. Poetic creation therefore lies in seeing a thing as an individual whole, not an element in a system of reality. Our actual experience of events and things is fragmentary in character. We feel the existence of relations and connections without becoming fully cognisant of them. Not that we can ever achieve complete knowledge of either the element or the system. Though given as fact, every element is given as existing by reference to something else. " Living by relation to what it excludes, it transcends its limits to join another element and invites that element within its own boundaries. But with edges ragged and wavering, that flow outward and inward unstably, it already is lost." And as for the system, " the series of phenomena is so infected with relativity that while it is itself it can never be made absolute. Its existence refers itself to what is beyond and did it not do so, it would cease to exist. A last fact, a final link is not merely a thing which we cannot know but a thing which could not possibly be real Our chain by its nature cannot have a support. Its essence excludes a fastening at the end. We do not merely fear that it hangs in the air but we know it must do so. And when the end is unsupported all the rest is unsupported."

IV

The scientist attempts to unravel relations and connections between elements of experience out of pragmatic interest. His main business is not to understand and state what they are, but to interpret and state how they ought to be conceived in order to generalise their important relations to other things and be able to predict or control their behaviour. The scientist cannot avoid interpretation and organisation of experience from the point of view of purpose, individual or social, even if he wants to. The very language he uses for his science is shot through and through with such interpretation and organisation. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that we cannot even allude to an experience without interpreting it. And science is the attempt to carry this interpretation to its logical conclusion. The scientist is only interested in the relation of a selected piece or aspect of reality to the world from which it is drawn. His attention is so concentrated upon the relations that he often loses sight of the thing itself. In his analysis, the details become so important that the whole is to him merely the uninteresting aggregate of interesting parts. Even his theory which seeks to unite and bind the parts into a whole is concerned more with the relations of the parts to one another and to the whole than with the character of the system or totality in which they inhere.

This concentration upon the relations of elements of reality betrays the origin of science in the practical needs of life. For action, concentration on the relevant elements is not only helpful but indispensable. A hunter fighting a wild animal must not allow his attention to wander from the immediate object of killing it. To notice the beauty of its form or grace of its movement would be worse than useless, it would be fatal. This practical origin expresses itself in the concern of science with some exclusive aspect of reality. It studies the relations between different elements of reality from the point of view of a definite purpose. Whatever is not relevant to that purpose, is of no interest to it. This explains why a science is an exclusive study of the behaviour of a particular aspect of phenomena. The fragmentary character of science is a necessary consequence of its practical origin.

The ordinary man also is interested in the relations of things to this systematic reality of which they are parts. This systematic world is a necessary assumption of his experience, but he is not generally consciously aware of it. He senses the presence of the parts and the whole and their inter-relations, but he does so only imperfectly and confusedly. So far as he is dimly aware of the world to which the things and their relations belong, it may be said that he sees more than the scientist. His vision is, however, weak and uncertain. He often tends to overlook or even forget the relations between the things. The particulars often exhaust his interest and energy. He forgets that even in order to deal with the particular, he must go beyond them and attempt a vision of the world of which they are parts.

A sensitive perception of the situation no doubt often evokes the right response, but so long as this response is blind and unreasoned, a man is apt to be misled by some chance and unessential aspect of the situation before him. If on the other hand, he is conscious of the principle of unity among the diverse elements, the details are evaluated with reference to their place in the scheme. The diverse elements that experience presents to him occur again and again, but always with a difference. Not unoften, it is the difference which is the most important factor for his consideration. This combination of repetition and novelty makes it the more necessary to classify experiences for future reference and appropriate response. Dependence on the intuition of the moment, without the consciousness of any underlying principle, may and often does lead to right action, but it carries in itself no assurance of right decision amidst the complexities of life. Further, it is essentiallly atomic in character and throws into relief the uniqueness and isolation rather than the common humanity of the common man. This tends to hamper the progress of society. There is no generalisation of the experience of the community in order to warrant the projection of individual minds into unexplored regions from some permanent and consolidated basis. That is why man cannot rest content with the point of view of commonsense. He seeks for partial uniformities even at the cost of losing sight of the whole. In science, he organises his knowledge of aspects of reality and expresses it in generalised principles that supply a common standard of comparison. This also ensures the possibility of progress through the enrichment of individual consciousness by the accumulated experience of the community, but in achieving this, scientific knowledge becomes highly specialised and abstract.

The ordinary man, we may then say, stands midway between the scientist and the poet. The scientist's main interest is in the relations obtaining between different aspects of reality with a view to predicting and controlling behaviour. Hence his concern is with the general features of experience. Those aspects in it which are unique do not interest him. The poet's main concern is with the object of experience in isolation from its practical or cognitive implications. He is therefore indifferent to those generalised features of experience which constitute its value to the scientist. He finds his delight in those elements in it which make it the unique experience it is. And there is no denying that every one of our experiences is unique . It is made what it is by the fact that it is our experience and ours in a special context of thought and feeling, a context from which it cannot be abstracted without some loss of quality. Hence, something of what goes to make it what it is must be lost when we attempt to recreate it even to ourselves, while to communicate it fully to another is perhaps altogether impossible. Yet we must make the attempt under penalty of utter isolation if we fail : and there is nothing man dreads more than the result of this impulse to transcend the limits of mere individuality. To recognise identity persisting among heterogeneous surroundings, to abstract from, refer to or construct systems are all attempts to build up through love, religion and knowledge a common life. The scientist emphasises and at times even exaggerates the elements necessary for such transcendence. The poet's concern is with the complexity of contents in their uniqueness—with the given-in-experience—so that even the spatio-temporal co-efficients are charged with a new value. The ordinary man gets along by shifting his emphasis from the one to the other aspect of experience.

Every one of our experiences is therefore in one sense unique and the artist is interested in it as unique. The abandonment of both the practical and the cognitive points of view liberates it from the iron chain of necessity. It is no longer a mere bubble in a dissolving flux, with ragged and wavering edges merging into other bubbles of a similar nature. Released from the unceasing process of change, it loses the fragmentary character which knowledge and practice discover in every experience. This fragmentary character is enhanced by space and time. Time is known only as an order of change and space as its receptacle. The grounding of experience in systematic reality is necessary as a background of cognitive and practical activity. Liberation of experience from space and time is at the same time a conquest of the flux of space and time. Art which expresses this freedom of experience is therefore timeless and changeless. Immutability of art is the expression of its immunity from the causal order.

To see experience as unique and unrelated is to see it as a whole. Spinoza understood by substance that which is in itself and is conceived through itself, and concluded that there can be only one substance of its kind. Leibnitz accepted Spinoza's principle and pointed out that this did not rule out the possibility of an infinite number of substances, each self-contained, windowless and unique. The liberation of experience from the compulsion of knowledge and practice makes it unique, unrelated and a totality—in other words, a monad. Poetry which expresses such experience is therefore self-contained, windowless and unique. Two substances having different attributes have nothing in common between them and hence there can be nothing in common between two poems. The world of art is a world of monads.

The monadic experience which constitutes the content of poetry is totality and therefore complex. That which is absolutely simple is absolutely unknown, for diversity is a necessary condition of knowledge. In the case of poetic experience, this diversity is intensified. The suspension of conative and cognitive responses enhances the clearness of the perception as well as the poetry is totality and therefore complex. That which is abso-many elements which in real life cannot struggle into our consciousness, for, as Roger Fry points out, almost all the things which are useful in any way put on more or less a cap of invisibility which hides all characters except those immediately useful. Similarly, the emotions accompanying these perceptions are realised more clearly in the experience of rt. The need of responsive action does not divert our attention from the enjoyment of the feeling. Hence pure vision abstracted from necessity and pure feeling divorced from resultant action make such experiences more complex and diversified than the experiences of normal life. In spite of greater diversity and complexity, the elements in poetic experience constitute an organic whole of which the number of parts do not confuse and hide the unity. To see an experience as a whole and to see it as unique are therefore merely different ways of expressing the same fact. Any event or experience is so rich in integrated elements and relations that its duplication is almost inconceivable. It therefore follows that seeing anything whole is seeing it unique.

An experience is therefore seized on, isolated out of the flux of things and contemplated for its own sake. Because it is related neither to what has gone before nor to what will follow, it is a unique and self-contained totality. The unity of such experience is therefore not derivative but originates from within. Hence the complex elements which constitute it must exhibit perfect inter-relationship. When experience reveals such perfect interrelationship of the elements, we call it significant. Poetry by freeing experience from the practical and the cognitive attitudes makes experience significant. This it does by seeing it as a unique and unrelated totality. The function of the poet may therefore be defined as revealing the unique individuality of things. The scientific desire to understand makes indifferent universalisation of objects the aim of science. The poetic impulse to enjoy acquaintance results in their unique individualisation as objects of art.

The realisation of the uniqueness of experience is accompanied not only by a purer, but also by a heightened emotional charge. Familiarity dulls the edge of pleasure. The economy of life teaches us to see only so much as is necessary for recognising or identifying a familiar object and ignores its other aspects. Hence the responses evoked are only those suitable for the occasion : the rest of our nature remains dormant. But the incursion of an unfamiliar object disturbs the set patterns of behaviour and forces the whole organism to react. Because there is no predetermined mode of response, all the powers of the organism are roused to activity. The result is a quickening of all the faculties, cognitive, emotional and conative. This helps to explain why a child is in a state of continuous excitement. To the child, every moment brings with it its novelty. Life is a continual adventure and his heightened consciousness is a symptom of his love for it.

Poetry is indeed in a way like love. There may be, and in fact are, thousands and millions of women in the world but at the moment of ecstatic love, it is " the unique she " who alone exists for the lover. The delight of this knowledge of her uniqueness is inseparably tied up with the fervour and emotional excitement of his being. If the lover is told that it is an illusion, he simply laughs at the remark. Nothing can prove to him the falsity of what he so directly apprehends. And if he is indeed deluded, is not his dream better than the awakening ?

The poet's function then is to see the uniqueness of things and give them a permanent form. The unceasing march of things and events threatens to hurry them into one process of undifferentiated and indefinite fragments. Cognitive and practical life must regard them so. They can serve their function in our vital economy only as elements in a unified system. It is only at rare moments that it is given even to a poet to see objects as unique and individual. Poetry therefore represents his attempt to crystalise in a permanent form and shape the content of a fleeting vision, but that which it embodies and must embody is individual and unique. To call a thing commonplace or as of a class, is its utter artistic damnation.

The function of the poet is therefore to see and embody the individual in objects of experience. Through his creations, he brings them before the consciousness of others less blessed with this—what may be called second sight—but how a few hints and notes jotted in words, colour, marble or sound evoke in himself and others this sense of a world of individual wholes is another and an equally fascinating story.

10. K. M. KHADYE

[With his enviable qualities of head and heart, his deep learning, sound judgment, wide outlook and broad sympathies—Prof. Khadye is one who would easily be an outstanding individual in any company of intellectuals. A man of thought and reason, of an understanding nature and generous impulses, an engaging conversationalist, a skilled debator, a good friend, philosopher and guide—he has many traits which endear him to all those who come into contact with him. Born on 11th September 1890, in Ratnagiri District (Bombay Province), Mr. Khadye passed with distinction the B.A. and M.A. examinations of the University of Bombay in 1911 and 1943 respectively. The next year he joined the staff of the English Department of the Fergusson College, Poona. In 1918 he went over to England and entered Fitzwilliam House, and in two years took the English Tripos (A and B sections together) of the University of Cambridge. He was the first student to take the two sections together and, as such, earned the esteem of his teachers —"Q", Prof. M. D. Forbes, Prof. Chadwick, Dr. I. A. Richards and Prof. E. M. W. Tillyard. From 1920 to 1921 he was engaged in research on "Aesthetics and Literature" under the guidance of Dr. I. A. Richards, and was the recipient of a grant-in-aid for the purpose from the India Office. But compelling reasons brought him back to India in 1921 before he could finish his work. He resumed his place at the Fergusson College, Poona, and worked there till 1930. In that year he went over to the Annamalai University as Professor and Head of the Department of English. He was subsequently elected as the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. In 1931, for four months, he officiated as the Vice-Chancellor of that University and earned reputation as a shrewd and capable administrator. In 1932 he returned to Poona as one of the foundation life-members of the Modern Education Society, and became the first Principal of the Nowrosjee Wadia College. For six years as Principal and for four more years as Professor, he worked in this institution—consolidating his reputation as an excellent teacher of English. He retired form Wadia College in 1943—after the completion of his pledge of serving the Modern Education Society for ten years. He has still his intimate connection with the University of Bombay—as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and as President of the Board of Studies in English. It is understood that he is to be the Principal of a new college in Poona which is expected to come into existence from June of this year.

Prof. Khadye is at present working on *The Historical Aspect of the Mahabharata*—which, when completed, is bound to be a monumental contribution to our literature. The literary work that he has already produced includes—*Fielding : A Study, The Winter's Tale : A Study, Antony and Cleopatra : A Study,* a critical edition of some Books of *Paradise Lost,* and *Benedetto Croce's Aesthetic Applied to Literary Criticism*—and is first-rate in quality. The contribution of Prof. Khadye included below forms part of the last mentioned work of his, and relates to a very fascinating aesthetic and literary problem. In the Foreword to Prof. Khadye's book, Dr. I. A. Richards writes:"....The exposition of Croce is not an easy task. It demands exceptional acquaintance with widely different fields of study. Further, the formation of a just opinion requires personal qualities which are uncommon. Professor Khadye has failed in neither respect. In view particularly of the extent to which Croce is at present misinterpreted, his essay is most welcome. The fruit of a very careful and patient study of his author, it offers at once a clear, faithful and critical exposition and a temperate and generous appraisement. It is the only work of which all this can be said which has yet appeared." On reading the book, Prof. E. M. W. Tillyard wrote to the author: "Your exposition of Croce's *Estetica* is the clearest I have read. I must express my admiration for your excellent English. You have mastered the language in a surprising way." And here is the essay itself (with only a few portions omitted) which will convince you of the justness of the praise bestowed upon Prof. Khadye by two of England's eminent critics.]

CROCE'S *AESTHETIC* AND LITERARY CRITICISM

I

INTRODUCTION

The History of Criticism has been extremely varied. Mere praise or censure of a work of art in words like "how fine" or "no good" must have been its earliest form. The notable judgment in the *Iliad* on the shield of Achilles—"that was a marvellous piece of work"—is the first instance of art criticism in the extant literature of Europe. An indefatigable student of early Greek would undoubtedly find a similar example in connection with some poetical utterance. But when a large body of literature came into existence, this impressionist method could not suffice. Canons of judgment had to be formulated if critical opinions were to have any weight, and this was the work of the first, and even now the foremost, Literary Critic.

The great author of the "Poetics" took the actual works written by the poets in his own time and earlier, studied and analysed them, and arrived at a series of inductions which have remained valuable to this day. In modern times, England has, as a rule, followed this method of going to actual works of art, and by a direct examination of them, of arriving at some valuable principles of criticism. This is the Inductive method.

As Aristotle is the father of the inductive, so Horace is the father of the judicial method of criticism. Rules of literary art were made, often by a process of borrowing from Aristotle's inductions, and giving these the weight that is given in a normal state to statute law ; works of art were then judged by the definite and arbitrary standards thus laid down. The work begun in "Ars Poetica," was continued after the Renaissance by Castelvetro in Italy, but its real sphere of influence was France. Rapin, Malherbe, Le Bossu, Boileau, are some of the most notable critics who adopted the judicial method and perfected it in its rigidity. The method had its votaries also in England, but the best literary critics of England, including Sidney and Dryden, gave it more a lip service than a sincere recognition. Roman in origin this has been in modern times, roughly speaking, the peculiar method of the French people.

There is yet another method of literary criticism, a method shadowed forth by Plato and Plotinus, but a method really made possible by the philosophical theories of men like Kant, Schopenhauer, Schiller, Schelling, Hegel and Croce. The method is characteristically German. These men would first consider what is Art, whether literature is one of the Arts, if so how far, and then apply their theories of fine arts to literature. The method has its philosophical value, but we have yet to see its value in actual literary criticism. One of these theories—the theory of Benedetto Croce it is our purpose ot examine in this Essay. Croce is an Italian philosopher, and he is anxious to acknowledge his debt to his Italian predecessors, but it is plain to all who read his work that his spiritual home is Germany, and that his philosophy smacks of the characteristic "thoroughness" of the Germans. We shall attempt, so far as possible, to apply the principles of his theory to literary criticism.

There are other methods of literary criticism such as the historical, the psychological, the comparative, but none of them has yet thoroughly developed an independent existence. They have either been absorbed by the other methods we have described above, or have led the student to fields remote from the study of literature as an art.

II

CROCE'S THEORY OF CRITICISM

"Criticism is an art that undergoes a great variety of changes, and aims at different objects at different times," wrote Hazlitt, and the history of criticism fully bears him out. If at one time we find it asserted, as for instance by Sainte-Beuve, that "the property of critics in general, as their very name sufficiently shows, is to judge—at need to give trenchant and peremptory judgments," at another time we find an eminent critic like M. Anatole France, maintaining that criticism is nothing but "the adventures of a soul among masterpieces."

Croce indeed talks of judging a work of art. But judging has a special meaning for him, and he believes that most critics of art are with him in his interpretation of that word. "What is meant by judging a work of art ? To reproduce it in oneself, answer the critics of art, almost with one voice." These are his words in the "Aesthetic." Apparently therefore he does not understand the word "judge," in the sense in which Mr. Edmund Gosse uses it in the Encyclopædia Britannica, when he defines criticism as the "art of judging the *qualities and values* of an aesthetic object."

Having accepted that the object of criticism is to reproduce the work of art in oneself Croce proceeds to examine how this can be achieved.

"The judicial activity, which criticises and recognises the beautiful, is identical with that which produced it. The only difference lies in the diversity of circumstances since in the one case it is a question of aesthetic production, in the other of reproduction." The critic who wishes to judge a work of art has to go through the same process as the artist—only the order of some steps is changed. The artist seeks the expression of an impression, tries several methods, and when ultimately he arrives at the sought-for expression, embodies it in words, phrases, colours, etc., *the physical stimulants of reproduction.* The critic has "the physical signs" ready before him. These help him to re-create the expression of the artist. The only necessary condition is that the critic "must of necessity place himself at the artist's point of view."

Is reproduction of "expressions" possible ? Will not the "expression" of the critic be different from that of the arist ? "If the variety of physical and psychic conditions were intrinsically unsurmountable" reproduction would have been impossible, but "the insuperability has none of the characters of necessity" and therefore it is possible, and in fact, "when we can replace ourselves in conditions, in which the physical stimulus was produced," it is achieved. In his Heidelberg lecture, he tries to make this point a little clearer. "A life lived, a feeling felt, a volition willed are certainly impossible to reproduce, because nothing happens more than once, and my situation at the present moment is not that of any other being, nor is it mine of the moment before, nor will be of the moment to follow. But art remakes *ideally*, and *ideally* expresses my momentary situation. Its image produced by art becomes separated from time and space, and can be again made and again contemplated in its *ideal-reality* from every point of time and space. It belongs not to the *world*, but to the *super-world*, not to the flying moment, but to eternity. Thus life passes, but art endures."

Even if it be admitted that reproduction of an ideal artistic image is not intrinsically impossible, the fact remains that to reproduce it we must be able to replace ourselves in the conditions in which it was produced. How can this be done ? Here it is that *historical interpretation* comes to our rescue. It "reintegrates in us historical conditions which have been altered in the course of history. It revives the dead, completes the fragmentary, and affords us the opportunity of seeing the work of art, as its author saw it, at the moment of pruduction." In this connection Croce emphasises the importance of tradition "with the help of which it is possible to collect the scattered rays and cause them to converge on one centre."

Tradition and historical research, however, do not by themselves suffice for the reproduction of a work of art. Croce adds : "Taste and imagination trained and awakened are likewise presupposed." Croce has said that taste and genius are essentially the same thing, and that every man is a genius ; so what he insists upon is simply the necessity of continuous practice in enjoying works of art.

One of the corollaries of Croce's position in regard to the function of criticism would be that the artist is his best critic. Experience does not always support this view. In defence of his own position Croce points out some "disturbing elements." "Haste, vanity, want of reflection, theoretic prejudices, make people say and sometiems others almost believe, that works of ours are beautiful, which, if we were truly to turn inwards upon ourselves we should see ugly, as they really are." If then these "disturbing elements" were eliminated, the artists would be their best critics.

Is it not possible for a man of taste to have "an obscure vision" of what the artist saw very clearly ? If the critic be a man of cultivated taste and if he succeed in placing himself at the author's point of view, such a thing, Croce maintains, is impossible, and if some judgments appear to prove to the contrary, it is so because "haste, laziness, want of reflection, theoretic prejudices, personal sympathies, or animosities, and other motives of a similar sort, sometimes cause the critics to proclaim beautiful what is ugly, and ugly what is beautiful." When these "disturbing elements" are not sufficient to account for the existence of the variety of judgments, Croce explains away the difficulty by bringing to our notice the fact, that reproduction can take place, only if all the other conditions remain equal, and that "the physical stimulus changes and so do the psychological conditions." To arrive at a "just and *the only criticism*" it is necessary to restore the original stimulus, and to re-create for ourselves the original psychological conditions. Historical research attempts to do this, and is invaluable for criticism of art. But can it, we may ask, ever completely succeed in re-creating the original psychological conditions ? If it cannot, the "just and *only* criticism" of the great art of the past, is no more than merely a pious aspiration.

Croce appears to distinguish between the function of the critic and the historian of art and to give the historian a duty which by others is assigned to the critic. "A man who, after having acquired the requisite historical erudition, reproduces in himself and tastes a work of art, may remain simply a man of taste, or express at the most his own feeling, with an exclamation of beautiful or ugly." That is a critic. The historian has to have "a second internal operation." He must "express the reproduction in the shape of description, exposition or representation."

III

CROCE'S THEORIES APPLIED TO LITERATURE

Professor Wildon Carr, in his exposition of the "Philosophy of Croce" puts forth the following view :—

> "Ruskin may well stand as the type of a class of writers on aesthetic of whom many and famous examples belong to our own country and literature. They are artists who criticise art. They are deeply interested in the philosophy of art and often give us profound insight into it, but their main direc-

> tion is not towards a philosophy of art indifferent to any particular productions; it is towards art itself and its appreciation. We go to them for example to enhance our enjoyment of the work of Polycleitus or Michael Angelo, of Dante, or Beethoven. *We do not go to them as we go to Knat, or to Schopenhauer or Schelling, or to Hegel, whose aesthetic appreciation may be no whit above the vulgar,* for a theory of art itself."

Here if Prof. Wildon Carr rather dogmatically claims for philosophers the sole privilege of formulating a theory of art itself, he gives up all claims in their favour of appreciating art, in so far at least as they are philosophers. Croce is a philosopher, and has formulated a theory of art, but he has also done much valuable work in actual literary criticism. Literary Criticism itself is said to have drawn him to philosophy. He does not rest content with giving a theory of art, but he tries to give a theory of criticism also. Moreover, in his *Problemi di estetica* he maintains that the theory of beauty is of practical use to the critic and he seems to suggest that criticism is " the deduction of our appreciation from a true theory." We shall therefore now make an attempt to apply his principles to actual literature.

As Croce holds " the aesthetic fact is altogether complete in the expressive elaboration of the impressions " or in other words that " a true work of art is the internal picture," he cannot as an art critic concern himself with what other people call actual works of art. The questions like those of rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, sound-values, and all the devices of versification, fall outside the scope of the art critic, and so does the question of what is called " dramatic " criticism—the criticism that takes note of the fact that the drama is an inevitable product of theatrical conditions. All these questions come within the scope of the practical activity, but have nothing to do with the true work of art.

Again, as art is pure intuition, and as such not concerned with any intellectual mixture, criticism of an artistic product cannot deal with the thought or idea behind it. Questions therefore like those of the choice of proper poetic themes, of the necessity or otherwise of historical reality or creditability of the subject matter, of the allegorical significance of certain works and the moral value of others—all these questions are excluded from the province of the critic of art.

The only question that a critic can ask is :—" Whether the work of art is expressive, and what it expresses, *whether it* *speaks or stammers, or is silent altogether.*" If a man of taste and imagination, who has taken the trouble to put himself at the author's point of view, has a clear picture conveyed to his mind, the work of art is expressive and therefore beautiful. If only a part of the same work is visualised—or experienced in some other form of mental image,—that part alone is beautiful and the rest is ugly.

But are there any modes or grades of expression ? Croce says " one may scrutinise aesthetic facts as much as one will ever be found among them, nor will the aesthetic fact be divisible into a first and a second degree." " This signifies that a philosophical classification of expressions is not possible." " It is impossible to separate in aesthetic analysis, the subjective from the objective side, the lyric from epic, the image or feeling from that of things." If a division of literary works into classes is impossible, it follows as a matter of course, that the whole edifice of rules and laws governing the several classes of literary works falls with a crash. To be fair to Croce, it must be stated that he allows of an empirical division into classes for purposes of convenience but he sets his face defiantly against even " the counsels of perfection " or inductions, such as we are accustomed to, in Aristotle.

Not only is a division of works of art into lyric, epic, dramatic ; or comic, tragic, sublime ; or objective and subjective ; or classic and romantic ; impossible : but even the divisions into simple and ornate, or proper and metaphorical, is impossible. There are no grades of expression and therefore " the theory of ornament or of rhetorical categories " cannot hold water.

Professor Spingarn in his " New Criticism " quotes Goethe and Carlyle on the first and foremost duty of the critic : " There is a destructive and a creative or constructive criticism," said Goethe, " the first measures and tests literature, according to mechanical standards, the second answers the fundamental question ' what has the writer proposed to himself to do ? and how far has he succeeded in carrying out his plan ' " and Carlyle : " the critic's first and foremost duty is to make plain to himself what the poet's aim really and truly was, how the task he had to do stood before his eyes, and how far with such materials as were afforded him he has fulfilled it." Professor Spingarn himself adds : " What has the poet tried to do and *how* has he fulfilled his intention ? What is he striving to express and *how* has he expressed it ? What impression does his work make *on me*, and how can I best express *this* impression ? These are the questions that 19th century critics have been taught to ask when face to face with the work of a poet."

Professor Spingarn has enrolled himself under Croce's banner and he seems to suggest that Croce's theory lays emphasis on these same questions. Can Croce's theory answer any one of *his* questions ? If as a critic I succeeded with the aid of the "physical facts "in reproducing *the expression* of the artist, I know simultaneously what the poet tried to do and *how*, but I cannot discover what the poet tried to do, if I do not know *how* he did it. There is on Croce's view no possibility of my knowing the answer to one of the questions to the exclusion of the other. If I do not know *how* the poet has expressed his impression, I cannot know what impressions he strove to express. Professor Spingarn, it is presumed, does not understand the word *how* as asking only whether the work of art is beautiful, partly beautiful, or ugly. Croce cannot without putting himself at the artist's point of view, ask, what impression a particular work makes *on him.* In fact his impression in so far as it is not a mere reproduction of the original author's expression, has absolutely no value as a criticism of that work of art. On his own theory Croce, as a critic, cannot care at all to see how he can best express *his impression* though he may incidentally express his feelings. Even as a historian of literature he would merely embody in the shape of exposition or representation *the expression of the original poet* which he happens to be successful in reproducing.

To be able to reproduce the expression of a poet, a critic must put himself at the poet's point of view. A critic may perhaps study the environment and biography of the poet and the tradition of the poem, but he may not be successful in identifying himself with the poet when he actually produced his work. An approach to this is sometimes possible, and then the result is a brilliant piece of creative criticism. But if this is the sole condition on which, we can appreciate works of art, a large number of them would be sealed books to us. The social, intellectual, and linguistic conditions of an age and of a country entirely different from ours are not easy to re-live in, and many people would find the task entirely impossible, but even such people enjoy the art of that age and that country. They may not be the best critics of such work, but absolutely to deny them the right of expressing their opinion, or to deny it any value is, to say the least, mere pedantry. Croce says that art is universal, and yet his requirements of the critic would limit the appreciation of art to very few, and would draw upon him the condemnation of those who with Tolstoy believe in the necessity of a universal appeal for art.

There are works of art in which different ages and different men have discovered different beauties and this fact is most unmistakable in the case of the greatest works of art—so much so that some people look upon this as an essential feature of all great art. In strict conformity with his theory Croce could not give this consideration any value.

It is generally admitted that contemporary works are not estimated at their proper value, and that a certain amount of time has to pass before great literary works come into their own. Why should this be so ? It should certainly be easier to put ourselves in the atmosphere of a contemporary poet than of a poet of the past. Haste, vanity and such other reasons as Croce may on his own theory give, will not solve the difficulty altogether.

Is it not possible that a work of art, without changing, may come to present, to later judges, additional beauties made possible by successive changes of outlook—beauties not originally present for the author ; and this not for accidental reasons, but because of the real greatness of the art ? For instance, has not time and human experience gone on adding to the value of Shakespeare ?

Croce through his exaggeration of the importance of the author's point of view is led to include under Art, such *expressions* as are sufficient for the author, but " not sufficient to communicate with ease to another or other individuals." The intuition of the author may be of primary importance in the work of art, but perhaps the value of the work will depend as much on the power it has to appeal to an *adequate* reader as on the author's intuition.

The duty of critics has been throughout the ages to pronounce judgment, and though " the habit of granting degrees in poetry with honours " may be simply a futile pastime, the comparison of the qualities of different artistic works has been held to be the very essence of criticism. On his theory Croce has to stop with saying " beautiful " or " ugly," he cannot compare one work of art with another. If they are successful expressions there is no more to be said, and no essential differences to be noted between one work and another. There is no difference of quality and quantitative differences do not matter. This really means in non-Crocean language that the impression of one poet so long as it is sincerely rendered is as good as the impression of another. This is as Professor Vaughan says : " The abdication of art."

IV

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We have seen (in a section not included here) that if we accept Croce's meaning of Criticism, great criticism of the past ceases to be criticism even in name. We shall now try to see if new critics would be able properly to discover the value of art by the application of his principles.

In regard to the great works of the past—say in the case of Chaucer—comparatively speaking a modern writer—it is very difficult, not to say impossible, to put ourselves at the poet's point of view. Are we therefore to forego enjoying such work until historical erudition enables us to recreate those psychological conditions and our imagination gives us the ability to re-live in them ? Coming to more recent times, not materially different in psychological conditions from ours and selecting a poet whose life we know very well, and at whose point of view perhaps we can put ourselves, let us see if Croce's theories prove useful ; let us try to understand Shelley for instance. Here is a beautiful poem of his :

" My Soul is an enchanted boat,
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing,
And thine doth like an angel sit
Beside a helm conducting it.
Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing,
It seems to float ever, for ever,
Upon that many-winding river,
Between mountains, woods, abysses.
A paradise of wildernesses,
Till, like one in slumber bound
Borne to the ocean, I float down around
Into a sea profound, of ever spreading sound."

This is a part of Asia's address to the voice in the air which sings the exquisite song beginning with :

Life of life ! thy lips enkindle
With their love the breath between them.

Asia is travelling in the car " guided by the spirit of the hour. The car pauses within a cloud on the top of a snowy mountain. (The coursers are taking their customary rest on the brink of the night and morning !) Asia has been transfigured into " Life of Life " or " Child of Light " or " Lamp of Earth." The voice in the air speaks admiringly of her and Asia replies in the words we have quoted above.

We are accustomed to Shelley's flights in pure ethereal imaginative atmosphere and *Prometheus Unbound* prepares us completely for the journey. We visualise Asia, whose radiance of beauty it was scarcely possible to endure, singing on the brink of the night and morning. The words proceed from Shelley when he has identified himself with Asia. They express the image of Asia or of Shelley as Asia. Is it enough to say that they are capable of reproducing the image of the poet ? We certainly do reproduce some kind of image. But is not the image vague in the original, as well as in our reproduction of it ? It is not easy to have an image of " soul." " Silver waves " is better than white waves, but silver is too solid a substance to indicate the " changing waves." The " Soul " of Asia is an " enchanted boat " and the Soul of the spirit in the air " sits beside a helm " conducting the boat. The sweet singing of that spirit creates the waves on which the boat floats. All this we believe in, when we are in the poetic mood, but this does not prevent us from saying that the imagery is vague and that it was as vague for Shelley as it is for us. Vagueness is a characteristic of Shelley's and in it lies a certain charm denied to cut and dry imagery. If therefore we examine this beatiful poem by Croce's canon, we may have to deny beauty to it. Why is the poem valuable to us ? When Asia—this " Child of Light " talks with the invisible spirit in the air, high above us, in the ethereal regions, we feel ourselves transported there. We feel a thrill of ecstasy running through us. Then follows the enchanting melody of the piece, hardly distinguished from music. It is not mere technique,—it is pure unalloyed pleasure for us. And then there is that sweet oscillation by which we are moved onwards in the first three lines floating slowly " like a sleeping swan "—followed by a pause due to the steadying influence of "doth like an angel sit. Beside a helm conducting it "—then rushing onwards for three lines, when " mountains, woods and abysses " again steady us a little—until finally in the last three lines " we float down around, into a Sea profound of ever spreading sound."

It is for effects like these that we love this poem. If it were merely *expressive*, we should not have cared for it half so much. In that respect indeed it is below the average of great poems. Shall we not say therefore that Croce is not a satisfactory guide to those who want to enjoy art ?

Just for one more instance we may turn to an Indian poet. Here is a song (translated into English by the author himself) from the *Gitanjali* of Rabindranath Tagore :

> "I must launch out my boat. The languid hours pass by on the shore. Alas for me !
>
> The Spring has done its flowering and taken leave. And now with the burden of faded futile flowers I wait and linger.
>
> The waves have become clamorous, and upon the bank in the shady lane the yellow leaves flutter and fall.
>
> What emptiness do you gaze upon ? Do you not feel a thrill passing through the air with the notes of the far away song floating from the other shore ? "

We may try to put ourselves at Tagore's point of view, and be able to reproduce the original expression. Perhaps Rabindranath Tagore saw clearly and when we put ourselves at his point of view, we see clearly also. But is that enough ? The poem is definitely symbolic—allegorical and again the allegory is not " externally added on " to the poem, it is its very essence, we might almost say that the apparent meaning is added on to the symbolic. Perhaps the apparent meaning has its charm, independent of the allegory, but it is different from the charm of the whole real poem. " The poet has enjoyed the pleasures of youth. It is time now for him to be united with God. He must cross the ocean and meet God on the other shore. The call is very urgent. ' The notes of the far away song floating from the other shore ' send a thrill through him."

It is this meaning that appeals to every *adequate* reader of his. The poem reveals a truth or at least what to a mystic appears truth and is valuable from that point of view.

Croce would not care for all this. This is not the function of art, according to him.

We have therefore to come to the conclusion that Croce's theory does not give us any help in practical literary criticism. His conception of art as being identical with expression, is mistaken by many readers of the " Aesthetic," to convey an idea that it is to external form that he gives all the prominence, but anybody who goes deeper in his theory will see that the internal image and not the external form, is what he means by expression, and that his greatest poet is he who has a clear vision of what he writes.

The theory is very simple, and the qualification asked of an artist, is such an insignificant one that everybody possesses it. Croce admits the truth of the statement and yet does not give us any sound critical instrument, by which we can distinguish between great artists and small. Almost everybody who enjoys art, recognises this difference, not purely as quantitative, but as a difference of quality. Almost every other theory of art—whether we understand art as bringing its admirers in contact with the personality of the artist, or as binding us to God and our fellowmen, or as revealing a truth—a universal, an idea, or of art as balancing our conflicting emotions, or as transporting us into ecstasy—every one of these theories is a critical doctrine that enables us to appraise art, as much as to enjoy it, and though none of them, may be serviceable for all kinds of artistic production, each one is sufficiently useful for its own special sphere, and gives us more help in practical criticism than the doctrine of Croce.

V

✓ CROCE AS A PRACTICAL CRITIC

Mr. Douglas Ainslie's translation of Croce's remarkable essays on "Ariosto, Shakespeare and Corneille" came into our hands after we had written the previous sections. We would not deny the fact that this volume would have enabled us to state our position more clearly and more emphatically, but we do not think we need have made any the slightest alteration in our views regarding the adequacy of Croce's theories either of art or of criticism.

We have already admitted that Croce's work in actual literary criticism is extremely valuable. This volume provides further evidence in support of that view. Chapters VIII and IX of this volume—on 'Shakespearean Sentiment' and 'Motives and Development of Shakespearean Poetry' rank almost as high as any, on the study of Shakespeare, but we maintain that instead of being an illustrative application of his theories, they lend countenance to our suggestions about the inadequacy of those theories in actual criticism. We shall see how.

We have seen how Croce has set himself against the classification of works of art into comic, tragic, etc. Now in this volume he deals among other things with Shakespeare's comedy of love! Of course in doing this he may have merely drawn 'attention in general and approximately to certain groups to which, for one reason or another, it is desired to draw attention.' 'No scientific error' has been committed so far. This grouping may have been only as good as 'a rough classification of books by subjects, sizes or publishers.' With Croce it has no more value. Now look at Croce's discussion of *Romeo and Juliet* in this volume:

> "When Juliet enters her cell, the friar remarks with admiration her lightsome tread, which will never wear out the pavement, and reflects that a lover "may bestride the gossamer that idles in the wanton summer air, and yet not fall; so light is vanity." *Is it tragedy or comedy?* It is another situation of the eternal comedy: the love of two young people, almost children, which surmounts all social obstacles, including the hardest of all, family hatred and party feud, and goes on its way, careless of these obstacles and as though they had no importance for their hearts, no existence in reality . . . if the subtle provisions and the acuteness of Friar Lawrence turn out to be fallacious, if a sequence of misunderstandings makes them lose their way and take a wrong turning, if the two young lovers perish, it is the result of chance and the sentiment that arises from it is one of compassion, of compassion not divorced from envy, a sorrow, which, as Hegel said, is "a dolorous reconciliation and an unhappy beatitude in unhappiness. *This too then is tragedy, in a minor key, what one might call the tragedy of a comedy.*"

Can we believe after reading this discussion that Croce, the practical critic, gives no more weight to the grouping of the works of art in tragedies, comedies, etc., than to "a rough classification of books in a library"?

We have already shown how Croce does not recognize any qualitative differences between different works of art and how on his own theory, he cannot compare one work of art with another. And yet in this volume he has gone beyond comparing one work of art with another. He has compared the whole outlook of one great *poet* with that of another,—Shakespeare's with Ariosto's. He deals with the 'sentiment' of these two *poets*. He takes care to show that he is dealing with them as *poets* and not as philosophers. 'Shakespeare,' he says, 'is not a philosopher.' He rejects the word conception and insists upon the word 'sentiment' to express the poet's general outlook. This makes it clear to us that he is comparing the *art* or poetry of one poet with the art or poetry of another. The comparison is a splendid piece of criticism :—'What poets appear at first sight more different than Shakespeare and Ariosto? Yet they have this in common, that both look upon something that is beyond particular emotions and for this reason it has been said of both of them, more than once, that "they speak but little to the heart." . . . Ariosto veils and shades all the particular feelings that he represents, by means of his divine irony; and Shakespeare, in a different way by endowing all with equal vigour and relief succeeds in creating a sort of equilibrium, by means of reciprocal tension, which, owing to its mode of genesis, differs in every other respect from the harmony in which the singer of the *Furioso* delights......'

Croce, the practical critic, could give us this brilliant piece of criticism. Croce, the theoretical philosopher, could not make it possible, and therefore we maintain that his theories are not adequate even for such criticism as he himself writes.

Then there is this great question :—Has Croce succeeded in putting himself at Shakespeare's *point of view* ? Has his historical knowledge of tradition—presumably he knows Shakespeare's language as well as his own—revived the dead, completed the fragmentary, and afforded him the opportunity of seeing Shakespeare's works of art, as Shakespeare saw them, at the moment of production '? We shall not attempt an answer to this question. We only suggest that Shakespeare's text itself has yet to be settled.

If we set ourselves this task of showing the divergence between Croce's theory and practice we are afraid we shall make it an endless business, especially because Croce has his little tricks, his little politician's provisos that make it desirable for an honest critic of his to set him forth in greater detail than he would ordinarily like.

As an illustration of what we have suggested here we ask our readers to read the following two passages from the same volume, together :

> "The first observation leaps to the eye and is generally admitted : namely, that no particular feeling or order of feelings prevails in him ; it cannot be said of him that he is an amorous poet like Petrarch. a desperately sad poet like Leopardi, or heroic as Homer. His name is adorned rather with such epithets as *universal* poet, as perfectly *objective*, entirely *impersonal*, extraordinarily *impartial*."
>
> "Shakespeare is not a philosopher : his spiritual tendency is altogether opposed to the philosophic, which dominates both sentiment and the spectacle of life with thought that understands and explains it, reconciling conflicts under a single principle of dialectic. Shakespeare on the contrary takes both and renders them in their vital mobility—they know nothing of criticism and theory—and he does not offer any solution other than the evidence of visible representation. For this reason. when he is characterised and receives praises for his "objectivity," his "impersonality," his "universality" (and those who do this are not satisfied even with their *incorrect description* of the real psychological differences noted above, but proceed to claim a philosophical character for his spiritual attitude), it is advisable to *reject them all*."

We have kept these passages side by side and we need not dilate upon our thesis any further.

So we come to this : That Croce as a practical critic is very great,—we admit with Mr. E. S. of the *London Mercury* that on the negative side of criticism his talents can hardly be surpassed, —that as a philosopher he may be great for aught we know, but that as a formulator of an adequate theory of art which can be usefully applied to literature, he is nowhere.

11. B. S. MARDHEKAR

[Born on 1st December 1909, Mr. Mardhekar received his education at the Fergusson College, Poona, and the University College, London. On his return to India from England he worked for sometime on the editorial staff of the *The Times of India.* After that he joined the Bombay Educational Service and worked as Lecturer in English in the Elphinstone College, Bombay. In 1938 he relinquished this post and joined the All-India Radio, Bombay, where he is still working. Mr. Mardhekar is a widely known writer of poetry, fiction and criticism in Marathi, and has published—*Shishiragam* (poems), *Ratricha Diwas* (Novel), *Tambadi Mati* (Novel), and *Vangmayeen Mahatmata* (essays in literary criticism.) In English he has published poems (a collected volume under the title *Battle Spun and Other Poems* is awaiting publication), stories (in journals like *Triveni*), and essays in aesthetic and literary criticism. To this last belong two of Mr. Mardhekar's important publications—*Arts and Man* (Mortiboy's London, 1937) and *Two Lectures on an Aesthetic of Literature* (Karnatak Publishing House, Bombay, 1944.) The essay reproduced below is the second among the four which comprise *Arts and Man.* In the author's own words—"taken together they represent an attempt to elucidate the relation between poetics and aesthetics and seek in the light of that elucidation to justify a fresh approach to aesthetic and literary problems." Mr. Mardhekar's ideas are the outcome of deeply felt experiences, and therefore his conclusions are entirely his own. And it is precisely for that reason that they are valuable—for, has it not been justly said that no judgment in art becomes a real judgment until it has become a personal one ? Himself a poet, a lover of painting, and a student of aesthetics, Mr. Mardhekar brings to bear upon his work an intimate personal knowledge of the subject he deals with. That is why, whether we agree or not with his theory, we cannot but be struck by the "high seriousness of absolute sincerity" with which he presents his views.]

POETRY AND AESTHETIC THEORY

No one who ponders over the various problems of the aesthetic science and tries to seek light upon them from the writings of art critics and aesthetic philosophers will fail to be struck by the amount of confusion that has been imported into aesthetic theory by the fact that poetry has been treated as being on a par with the other fine arts. Such a conception, and the consequent temptation to treat the *Ars Poetica* as a representative art in the analysis, discussion and illustration of aesthetic problems, arise from causes which are not difficult to discern.

Poetry deals in words as carriers of emotional meanings. The intimate apprehension of emotional meanings is a biological necessity. Without the prompt apprehension of such meanings and the quick and proper reaction to them, the sentient being will not be able to maintain itself in the constant struggle for existence, nor succeed in perpetuating its species. The attraction of poetry, which helps the above process, is, therefore, quite natural, and its interest for human beings both widespread and perennial. Art critics and aesthetic philosophers. sharing this interest and moved by this attraction like the vast majority of human beings, with leanings primarily humanistic, tend almost invariably to resort to poetry while illustrating their analyses of aesthetic problems. Secondly, all discussion, and therefore aesthetic discussion, must be carried on in words. Those, therefore, who have a special facility in handling and manipulating linguistic symbols, by the volume of their voice, their repetitions and the charm of their verbal expression, come finally to saturate men's minds with their opinions, and induce a sort of mental hypnosis in which these opinions are accepted without challenge.

The chief traffickers in this kind of soporific aesthetics are the poets. Either by explicit aesthetic formulation or by recording their own reactions before a work of non-literary art, both of which could not but be in terms of poetic (that is to say, non-aesthetic-emotional) experiences, they have brought the assurance of an apparently authentic certainty to what was before merely a tempting surmise, namely, the assumption that poetry is a fine art on the same level as painting, music, sculpture, dancing, etc.

This all too human prejudice in favour of poetry, and the natural inclination to regard poetry as a *typical* fine art instead of recognising that there is a hierarchy of order among the fine arts, have received their most powerful philosophical sanction from the intuitional aesthetics of Benedetto Croce. It is a significant indication of the 'pattern of criticism', to use a happy phrase of Mr. Eliot, which the Crocean aesthetics has set that Croce's article on Aesthetics in the latest edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica begins with the examination of a poem, a piece from Virgil, and that the first sentence of the second paragraph reads as follows:

> "What has been said of 'poetry' applies to all other 'arts' commonly enumerated; painting, sculpture, architecture, music."

As a reaction against the 'compartmental' and unrelated criticism of his predecessors, the setting up of the abstract Crocean conception of Art, as against the various individual fine arts and transcending them, might have been both necessary and opportune; but unless the exact content of this conception is determined by a rigorous logical analysis, its value as what Dr. Richards would call 'a speculative instrument' for the investigation of aesthetic problems is of the most dubious kind. Once transfer it from the purpose for which it is relevant to other issues, and you will immediately land yourself in a complete aesthetic mess. It will then seem to you to follow with an absurdly evident necessity that, for the purposes of aesthetic theory and the elucidation of aesthetic problems in all their manifold aspects, one art is as good as another; that poetry is no worse than painting and music no better than either. What is, however, denied here is *not* that there is nothing common to the various fine arts, but that an abstraction—made for a certain purpose and with certain metaphysical or otherwise subjective predilections—can be rightfully held valid for the whole field of aesthetic science and be elevated to the position of a supreme principle from which any inference is legitimate without much further ado. "L'estetica dell' una parola," as we might describe the Crocean aesthetics without irreverence, even as Gentile has described the Crocean philosophy, "la filosofia delle quattro parole," has, I humbly submit, sinned in this latter way.

The tendency to think of human life as of the highest value and of the emotions which directly administer to its prolongation by ensuring its smooth and even flow as of paramount significance, reinforced by poetic utterances and justified by a philosophy, making of poetry the Ars Artis, has led to some unfortunate results in aesthetic theory. Since everyone understands, or thinks he understands, poetry, more or less, because its counters are his counters, and because the poet's experience differs from his experiences only in being more integral, less attenuated, and not *essentially*; and since there is a *prima facie* similarity between poetry and the other fine arts as both are in a strictly limited sense useless, the temptation is as obvious as it is compelling, to interpret all artistic creation and every aesthetic process in terms of those involved in literary production. The familiar facility with which such an interpretation can be given and the spurious, effortless and cheap joy which it is supposed to impart, soon turns what was once a temptation into a settled habit of mind.

Now in so far as poetry is a fine art (and it is not denied that it is a fine art, the contention merely being that it is not of the same order as the other fine arts), that is in so far as it yields an enjoyment that is aesthetic as opposed to the poetic or non-aesthetic-emotional (which means involving emotions that are in the last analysis either immediately or remotely instrumental), its products and processes must necessarily partake of the character of works of art and aesthetic processes. There is, therefore, nothing inherently absurd or illegitimate in the interpretation of the latter in terms of the former. Before, however, an interpretation of this type is essayed, it is absolutely essential that the literary processes and their products should be subjected to a stringent analysis and the nature of their terms adequately ascertained.

The next step is to equate these terms to exactly corresponding terms in similar aesthetic products and processes. Error may creep in either in the first or in the second step. Either the preliminary analysis is defective, or else there is a slight shifting in the placing of the terms of the one process against those of the other so that they do not really correspond. More often both these causes have combined to produce much false speculation and wrong aesthetic interpretation. Poetry thus conceived in ambiguous terms and poetical interpretation thus illegitimately extended have become a curse to aesthetic theory and a standing obstacle to the proper and full enjoyment of the other fine arts.

In order to detect where the ambiguity of the current analysis of the literary process and its products resides, and to realise the nature of the shift that has taken place in equating their terms to those of the aesthetic process, we cannot do better than examine the character of the middle term in those processes, that is of the 'medium' of poetry. For in poetry, as in every other fine art, a clear understanding of the nature of its medium is the beginning of appreciation. It is the pre-requisite of any aesthetic which aspires to be scientific. To grasp the precise nature of the medium of any fine art is to furnish oneself with a speculative instrument of the utmost value, which can at once reveal what is relevant, and differentiate between what is not like grain and chaff, when one undertakes criticism of that art.

Most of the errors, conflicts and confusion which are visible in the various aesthetic theories will be found utlimately to spring from a failure to define the concept of medium of art. Once you boggle over this concept, and fail perceive the medium of any particular art, you will commit all the current fallacies. You will appreciate one thing in the comfortable delusion that you are appreciating something else. You will indulge in perorational aethetics and believe that you have written a magnificent piece of acute art criticism. Fine phrases, although they cannot butter parsnips, are yet able to cover an incredible amount of faulty analysis, counterfeit enjoyment and mistaken enthusiasm.

Perhaps in the foregoing paragraph, while accusing others of a certain fault, I might appear to some to remain self-condemned for one very like it. Still more likely it is that I might appear to be making much ado about nothing. For no great philosopher is required to enlighten us on the question, what is the medium of poetry. The answer is perfectly simple : Words; though not, fortunately, Words, Words, Words !

But the matter is not so simple and it is advisable to cite a philosopher. As seasoned a scientific thinker and as acutely clear-headed a psychologist as Prof. Spearman has the following sentence on page 88 of his book, *The Creative Mind* :

> " And as the former (painter) employs for this purpose (representation of the physical world outside him) the medium of pigments, so the latter (the literary artist) uses words and phrases."

Immediately on the same we happen to read in the next paragraph :

> " The beauty sought by the painter is, in the main, that of his medium."

the obvious implication being that the aims of the painter and the literary artist are different. No more comment is needed than the mere juxtaposition of these two statements. Such a juxtaposition at once reveals how great a source of misunderstanding a half-hearted, perfunctory and superficial analysis can become even in the hands of one who is nothing if not severely analytical. If Prof. Spearman had gone sufficiently deep into the analysis of the medium of painting as well as that of the literary art, he would have come nearer to the truth in aesthetic theory and realised that the artistic aim of all the arts, painting and poetry included, is the same, namely, the revelation of the beauty of their several mediums. The differences between the various arts are the differences of their mediums. It is not that while painters seek the beauty of their medium, poets seek the beauty of something else.

That is a fairly recent book. But take one still more recent. Commenting on Prof. Abercrombie's critical position that 'The inspiration is the poem; something self-contained and self-sufficient, a complete and entire whole,' Prof. Dewey in a footnote of his book, *Art as Experience*, asks significantly, presumably believing the question to be disarming, 'if it is already self-sufficient and self-contained, why does it seek and find words as a medium of expression?' Now here again, if the nature of the medium, that is, of words, had been duly taken into account, it would have become apparent that the question posed is as meaningless as a similar question about paper, pen and ink would be. It is, however, needless to multiply illustrations of this point.

Let us then examine the nature of the medium of poetry, that is, of words, as briefly as possible. A word has primarily two aspects: (a) Sensational and (b) Intentional. In the first instance, it is a phenomenon of sound, a complex of auditory sensations, a group of vowels and consonants. In language, however, these sounds are not significant in themselves but only as they serve as symbols for something else. They are in short subsidiary to the second aspect, the Intentional. The intentional aspect is the sole justification of the existence of that particular combination of vowels and consonants. Language arises out of the necessity of communication and immensely facilitates it. It is fashioned by man for the more efficient carriage of human intercourse, and answers to the incessant demand of ever increasing thought contents for easier handling.

The evolution of meaning is a process of constructive thought, which thought is essentially a function of a limited consciousness. It is the product of the interaction of the circumscribed consciousness with that within which it finds itself so circumscribed and meaning has relevance and value for such a consciousness only. But the more frequent these interactions grow, the more various, the more complex they become, the less certain becomes the grasp of the circumscribed consciousness upon the meanings that emerge out of them, the more awkward, the more precarious its handling of them. A limited consciousness in its primary, least developed stages might perhaps be able to manipulate meanings themselves bodily; but it has very soon to face the necessity of finding some convenient shorthand, abbreviated method of storing them for social currency. It is only when incipient thought gathers weight and volume and craves for definition that it crystallises itself into words.

The sensation or sound aspect of a word is symbolical of the intentional, and is only used as a manageable vehicle for it. The combination of the two aspects in a word is at once a boon to, and a bane of every limited consciousness. In a world where partial or divided consciousness, as of the human being, did not exist there would be no meanings at all. To a consciousness that is universal, everything would be its own meaning, everything its own symbol. The division and combination of symbol and significance would be both impossible and unnecessary then. As we shall see presently, the necessity and nature of this division and this combination has not been sufficiently constantly nor sufficiently clearly kept in mind when equating the aesthetic to the literary process.

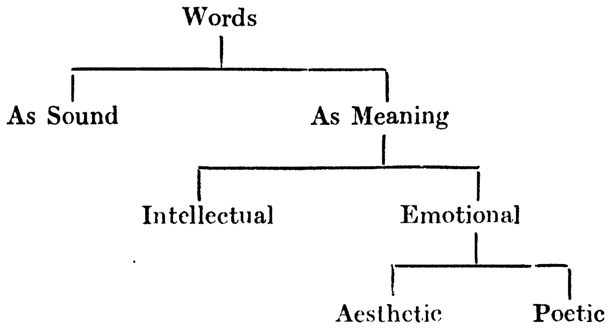
Now the intentional aspect of words or language can itself be further analysed into two aspects. Meaning, as a fact of mental life, has the two facets : (a) Cognitive and (b) Affective. It is, of course, a commonplace of psychology that there is no clear-cut division between the two, and it is only when someone fails to find some more original argument that he thinks it worth while reminding others of it. Yet the distinction between an experience that is predominantly intellectual and one that is predominantly emotional is not difficult to perceive. There are intellectual ideas, theoretical meaning and emotions, or emotional meaning. We need remark here this easily observable though not sharply marked difference.

Next we have to recognise two sub-divisions of the affective aspect or two categories of emotions. The first category we may call that of *pure* or *absolute* emotions, and group the second under the heading of *contingent* emotions. Pure or absolute emotions are the immediate accompaniments of the perception of the quality of any sensation, or of a pattern, a *Gestalt*, an organisation of relations. They are the necessary concomitants of any experience that is sensuous or formal, and do not derive from any 'experience of this world,' as that expression is understood when we say that old men are more experienced than the young. I have used the word emotions, but strictly speaking the word should be in the singular. We may call this emotion 'aesthetic' and so distinguish it from the other group of contingent emotions which are 'poetic.' They are contingent because they depend upon a specific human world order. They are contingent upon the existence and persistence of a particular demand of the environment.

It is, as I stated above, only in so far as they facilitate human reactions to the existing environment and ensure survival, that they are of any value. If the environment changes so that certain reactions are found to be no longer necessary, then the emotions which had formerly served these reactions tend to disappear, gradually suffering atrophy and ultimately vanishing altogether. Those emotions, for example, which accompanied the relations of the two sexes in the old days of chivalry have lost their *raison d'etre* in our times. For in a world where there is municipal peace, and physical culture is no longer the exclusive prerogative of only a section of mankind, the sentiment of chivalry is superfluous, except in so far as it is demanded by the requirements of social etiquette or a sense of decorum—that is to say, by the intrinsic grace of the conduct in which it displays itself, or except in so far as it is helpful to sublimate the sexual impulse. That emotion of love which governs the relations between parents and children would tend to disappear in a state organised on the Soviet model, in which a Government department looks after old parents and little babies, because in such a state that emotion would lose its sole relevance. That the prospect of such a disappearance is instantly resented and seldom fails to rouse profound indignation is only a reflection of the way in which the self-protective mechanism in man works, and confirms the view of the contingent nature of this kind of emotions. And nothing can indicate more clearly how men are willing to deceive themselves into faulty intellectual positions in the interests of poetry than all the flowers of language and rhetoric, all the glowing paens of praise and admiration bestowed upon the beauty of parental love and sacrifice, upon the nobility of filial piety and dutifulness, in terms of which their resentment and their indignation usually manifest themselves.

We may call the contingent emotions 'interested' also, since they are indulged in simply because they are biologically significant and useful, whereas the aesthetic emotion is 'disinterested,' and subserves no biological plan. Again the contingent emotions are merely 'instrumental': they promote ends that are outside the situations which realise the said emotions. In contrast, the aesthetic emotion is an end in itself; the end is fulfilled in the very moment in which the emotion is realised. It is thus significant on its own account.

To summarise the result of the foregoing discussion schematically:



With the aid of the above analysis, I wish to maintain the proposition that words, as implying both sound and meaning, are *not* the medium of poetry. Words can be said to be the medium of poetry only if we understand by words 'emotional meanings of the poetic type.' A less ambiguous way of stating the position would be to say that emotional meanings are the medium of poetry. It is these meanings that the poet works with and that he manipulates, and neither sound nor intellectual ideas as ideas. To speak roundly of words being the medium of poetry is to smuggle in sound and ideas as mere cognitive facts, and that works havoc—as will be seen in the next paragraph—in aesthetic theory. Poets who are second-rate are so, either because they employ the medium of one art while fashioning a work of another art, and thus, aspiring to become musicians when they ought to think of remaining poets, fall between two stools; or else because intellectual ideas have not in them been turned into fuel for an emotional blaze. The latter of these points I shall not labour at all, since very few would be disposed to dispute it.

"Meditate often on these truths, that some time or other they may become your feelings." And Sir Walter Raleigh, in his Wordsworth monograph, has spoken of the true mystic poet making thought the food of his emotions rather than emotions the food of his thoughts.

But despite the patent turns in the fortunes of Tennyson and Swinburne on the one hand, and of Browning on the other, the proposition that sound is irrelevant in poetry will be contested. Now I wish to state categorically that sound as sound has absolutely no place in poetry at all. That is the province of music. This proposition must be firmly grasped and never lost hold of. Sounds have only symbolic value in poetry, as carriers of emotional meanings, and not intrinsic value as in music. Only in so far as it develops, adds to, or emphasizes the meaning for which it conventionally stands is the sound of a word either significant or relevant in poetry. The besetting sin of second-rate poets and third-rate literary criticism is to consider this quite irrelevant element as in some sense a legitimate factor in poetic effects, to praise verse that is at least musical. Justifying Shelley to his students, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch said : " As students of poetry and its technique again, we shall have something to say ; but not so as to convey that he was *Vox et praeterea nihil* : which is, for all their polemics, the impression which Arnold and Swinburne agree in conveying with their combined dispraise and praise." The whole essay is indeed illuminating and shows how fatally mischievous (because essentially accidental, conventional and obviously irrelevant) the element of sound can become in literary appreciation and critical judgment.

The fact is that there is no inherent necessity that a particular combination of sounds must express particular meaning. The same meaning is expressed by different combinations of sounds in different languages, and sometimes even in the same language (as witness some of the synonyms, if not all). Conversely, the same combination of sounds may express different meanings in different languages or even in the same language.

The sound of the word 'murmur' is relevant in

> " ——murmur of flies on summer eves,"

because of its associations in an English mind ; that is, because of purely accidental circumstances. There is nothing in the mere vowels and consonants which make up that word that necessitates either the meaning or the associations. The same combination of vowels and consonants will convey an altogether different meaning to a Maratha man. The sound sensations of the word 'wail' will in a similar way mean different experiences in English and in the Indian language Marathi. The same view of the function of sounds in language can be illustrated by the following pairs : French 'Paris' and Italian 'pari'; Italian 'para' and Marathi sound equivalent to the same ; French pronunciation of 'bien' and a similar utterance in Marathi. Readers can easily supply more examples of this as well as of the other proposition that the same sounds may express different meanings in the same language, from any book on Phonetics.

This division between sound and meaning and the relevance of the latter alone in poetry is the core of the precept about the agreement of sound and sense in poetry. The misunderstanding of the nature of the medium of poetry is the cause of the ephemeral character of the commonly boosted 'sound poetry' of our day ; for whenever an artist, and therefore a poet, allows himself to be seduced by an irrelevant or secondarily relevant aspect of that with which he works into playing false to his medium, he inevitably condemns himself to speedy oblivion. To go a step further, not only are sounds irrelevant in poetry and outside its scope, but even the recognition of a sound effect, if sufficiently subtle, is dependent upon and conditioned by the prior realisation of the pattern of its emotional meanings. The protocols to the Sixth poem in Dr. Richards's book *Practical Criticism*, and the analyses they embody and the prosody-al conclusions to be derived from them would be sufficient to convince the reader of the truth of the above assertion. Particularly illuminating in this respect are the comments on the delicate rhyming of the first two lines :

> " Margaret ! are you grieving
> For golden grove unleafing ? "

Unless then the beauty of sounds is transmuted into the beauty of emotional meaning by the mechanism of associations or otherwise, poetry can take no cognizance of it. The quality of sound *qua* sound has no place in poetry. Many a rhymester could dribble out more melodious verse than that of even Shakespeare or Dante ! And epic poets are greater than writers of lyrics not because they are more musical but because they achieve larger, more complex and withal more coherent organised wholes of emotional meanings. It is indeed a curious irony that in music, where sounds and sound patterns alone are significant, men will hunt after emotional meanings, while in poetry, which offers them emotional meanings, they will not rest until they have squeezed what little drop of music they can out of it.

The foregoing analysis is not original except for the thoroughness, emphasis and categorical way with which it discards the claim of pure sound in poetry. The most important thing is the next step: to demonstrate, and correct if we can, in the light of the above analysis, the shift that has taken place in relating the aesthetic process to the literary. We might write the aesthetic process schematically thus :

Artist : Medium : Beauty :

Now we proceed to substitute the specific determinants of particular arts. First, let us take painting :

Artist : Medium : Beauty :

Painter : Visual Aspect of World : Beauty :
(colour, line, mass, etc.)

Then poetry :

Poet : Emotional Meanings : Beauty :

The beauty of the medium is revealed by organising it, by using it in accordance with formal principles. Now to remember our Spearman. One is led to treat painting and poetry as having different ends only when one has no clear conception of the medium of either. If you say pigments are the medium of painting, then you must say words are the medium of poetry, and then you have the way to unending ambiguity and confusion ; for once you start including irrelevant factors in the middle term, why and on what principle would you stop at one point rather than at another ? You attempt to write your painting process thus :

Painter : Pigments : Beauty :

and then proceed to write your literary process. Your first two terms are :

Poet : Words :

and you put MEANING as your third term, forgetting that this is already included in the second term in a way in which BEAUTY is not included in PIGMENTS. Another way of saying the same thing is this : taking the literary process first, you roughly analyse it in this way :

Poet : Words : Meaning :

Then the corresponding aesthetic process is supposed to be somewhat like this :

Painting : Pigments : Meaning :

The fallacy here lies, as can be easily seen, in the middle term. Pigments in the second process really correspond to the second and third terms put together in the first process. If you break up a term into two in the first process, you are logically bound to do likewise in the second. You must formulate your two processes thus :

Poet : Words : Meaning : Beauty :
Painter : Pigments : Colours : Beauty :

The common mistake is to seek the meaning of colours in pictures as you seek the meaning of words in poetry. But as words are meant for meanings, so pigments are meant for colours and not colours for meanings. Colours are not fashioned by man to signify something. No meanings, no words : but not No meanings, no colours in any intelligible sense of the terms. The words 'green' means green colour. If there had been no sensation of green that you wanted to communicate, there would never have come into being that particular combination of sounds to signify that fact. But greenness, the colour green, does not *mean*, in its own primary right, anything : it *is* just that colour. We come to associate certain ideas with greenness undoubtedly, but these are accretions : the green colour would still be green even if we forgot or eliminated all these associative factors. But if we forgot all the meaning of the word ' green,' that combination of vowels and consonants would not exist in our vocabulary.

So, whereas meaning is subsidiary, associative phenomena merely in the case of colours, sound is subsidiary, associative phenomena merely in the case of meanings (of words). The real correspondence is not this :

Meaning : Word :: Meaning : Colour

But rather this—

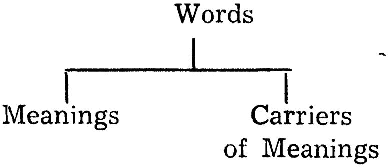
Meaning : Word:: Colour : Pigment

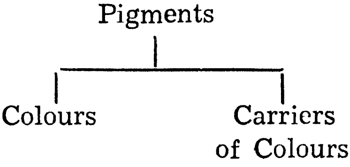
You can ask what is the meaning of colour, only if you ask what is the meaning of meaning also :

Painter : Pigments : Colours : Meaning :
Poet : Words : Meanings : Meaning : (of meaning)

This is perfectly legitimate, but then the question becomes not of meaning in the popular sense, but one of philosophical analysis, and in that case one has to refer to any book on the psychology of sensations and to Ogden and Richards's book, *The Meaning of Meaning.*

To summarise :





Or, thus :

Meaning + carriers of meaning — word

Colour + carriers of colour — pigment

To grasp that the sensation aspect—that is, the sound aspect of words—is purely symbolical, is a vehicle for meaning even as oil or water paint is a vehicle for colour ; that sound in the one case and oil or water paint in the other are in plain fact merely instrumental, and although indispensable without doubt as instruments, are not on that account essentially relevant to the nature of the creative process involved, is at once to detect the shift and understand its vitiating character. What has been discussed here in relation to painting applies to all the other fine arts in terms of their several mediums. And if you can guard yourself against this shift, then there is no harm in treating the creative process deduced from poetry as typical of all arts. Thus you will save yourself from falling into the pitfall of the representational versus abstract art controversy. Nor will you then misconceive the aesthetic process, because you have initially yielded to the emotional potency of poetry and tried to construe the former in terms of that underlying the latter.

Such an unambiguous treatment of poetry together with an analysis of the mediums of the various fine arts will bring a systematic unity in aesthetic theory, and yield principles which will hold valid for the entire field of artistic creation without exception. Upon the foundations of such an analysis alone can you erect securely the science of aesthetics and rid critical judgments of their bewildering and conflicting diversity. The supposed gap between the appreciation of literature and of the other fine arts will be bridged not by a sleight of the philosopher's hand, but by discovering the identity of the underlying formal processes. But this can happen, and poetry cease to be a curse to aesthetics, only when we realise the doubly emotional character of poetry, that is, only when we learn to distinguish between emotions which are the medium of poetry and that specific *sui generis* aesthetic emotion to which poetry (or those mediumal emotions as organised) like all other arts gives rise ; which aesthetic emotion is evoked by beauty, that is, by the perception of formal organisations, simply in virtue of their character of being formal organisations, instead of mere chaotic conglomerations.

12. C. NARAYANA MENON

[To have published one volume of solid worth—and that on Shakespeare—and to have received recognition for that as one of the few ' inevitable critics ' whom no serious student of Shakespeare can afford to ignore—this indeed is something unique. Scholars and critics of established reputation like Harley Granville Barker, G. Wilson Knight, Allardyce Nicoll, Percy Simpson, George Cookson, Middleton Murry, W.H.F. Lamont vied with each other in complimenting Dr. Menon upon his original work *Shakespearean Criticism* ; and so did distinguished papers and journals like *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Asiatic Review*, *Notes and Queries*, *English*, *Nottingham Guardian*, *London Mercury*, *Drama*. *Aus der Zeitschrift Deutsche Kultur*, and *Anglia Beimlatt*. The *East and West* declared : " Dr. Menon's interpretation of Shakespeare takes rank among such revelations of genius as Goethe's interpretation of *Hamlet* or Tagore's of *Shakuntala.*" Indeed, Dr. Menon's invaluable book " should render all Indians proud and every Indian Professor of English humble."

It was on 22nd June 1901 that Mr. Narayana Menon was born in Cochin State (South India). In 1919 he passed the Intermediate examination of the University of Madras, in First Class. In 1922 he passed the B.A. (Honours in English) of the same University in First Class, breaking the Madras Christian College record, and securing the University Medal. In 1929 he was awarded the Ph. D. degree by the University of Madras for his thesis entitled—"Shakespeare Tragedy Through Indian Eyes." A revised and recast version of this thesis under the title—" Shakespeare Criticism : An Essay in Synthesis "—brought Dr. Menon the D. Litt degree of the same University in 1939. After working for five years as Vice-Principal and Professor of English in Victoria College, Ceylon, Dr. Menon joined the Benares Hindu University in 1931 as Professor of English. He is still working there—loved and admired by his students. Dr. Menon is an extremely interesting man on account of his wide interests—which include Psychology and Economics. But he has the typical scholar's shyness, and that is why his work and worth are not more widely known than that they are at present. A devout Hindu, he has an incorrigible habit of deep thinking and calm reflection. Indeed, thought and reflection are his favourite pastimes. And it is out of this that his writings take birth—though rarely !

Dr. Menon's *Shakespeare Criticism* (Oxford University Press, 1938) is an epoch-making book, an event of first-rate importance in Indo-English criticism. Several Indians have written on Shakespeare, both briefly and elaborately, but none has so far exhibited such vastness of study, such assimilation of material, such unusual critical shrewdness, such profundity of wisdom, such catholicity of interests, and such conscientious, thoroughness—as Dr. Menon has in his remarkable masterpiece. The same characteristics, though in a lesser degree, are reflected in his latest monograph—*An Approach to the Ramayana* (Benares Hindu University Press, 1942.) But it is in his work on Shakespeare that the best and brightest of Dr. Menon in enshrined. In this Dr. Menon's Hindu mind is actively at work—"intuitively, inconsequentially, aphoristically, and arrives at the truth, by sudden assaults, as it were, and by the exercise of 'negative capability' rather than by strict logical ratiocination." In fact, the main thesis of Dr. Menon's book, the thesis that "almost everything written on Shakespeare is true"—is itself characteristic of the typical Hindu mind whose sheet-anchor is sympathetic tolerance. . . . The contribution with which Dr. Menon is represented here is the tenth chapter in his *Shakespeare Criticism*, and deals with a fascinating aspect of Tragedy—with special reference to Shakespeare, of course. I am aware of the possible injustice done to this essay by its presentation here in isolation. However, I have done this in the belief that it does not suffer much by being thus presented—for it is a somewhat self-contained essay. Some references also are omitted—in the belief that their absence does not affect the clarity of the essay. The essay speaks eloquently for itself. Dr. Menon's profound thought, critical insight, intuitive understanding, wide reading and aphoristic style—are all amply illustrated here.]

THE TRAGIC TRAIT

I

You think you know your neighbour. You have sat opposite to him at tea-parties and marked how he made the table roar with laughter. A thoroughly sane man, you say. But you have seen only the vine-clad sides of the sleeping volcano : you were not there when his son returned from England with a foreign bride. We see only the crust which has overspread life ; it requires the transparency of tragic art to reveal what slumbers within. To the guests at the State banquet the Othello escorting Lodovico must have appeared the same as the Othello who landed at Cyprus ; but, to Othello, life which meant intensely and meant good has become a mockery and a sham. How does the dramatist bring this home to the imagination of the audience ? By the isolation of the tragic trait.

The tragic trait is 'a fatal tendency to identify the whole being with one interest, object, passion or habit of mind.' Jonson's definition of 'humour' will fit.

> When some particular quality
> Doth so possess a man that it doth draw

All his affects, his spirits and his powers
In their conflucticns all to run one way,
This may be truly said to be a humour.

But with a difference. The comic trait is superficial, laughter kills it ; the tragic trait is within man, it kills him. Humour is a badge to distinguish characters by ; the tragic trait is that which makes the hero an enigma. Humour is a mechanism thrust from without ; the tragic trait is life entering from within. There have been moments when an absolute beauty seemed to shine through some object in this world of shifty shows, moments that seemed—

too flattering sweet to be substantial
(*Romeo and Juliet, II. ii. 141*)

so that we said to ourselves,

If it were now to die,
'Twere now to be most happy.
(*Othello, II. i. 191.*)

The enchanted heart palely loiters, haunted by the fragrance of a vision that is gone. Hamlet invests the reign of his father with more than earthly glamour ; Brutus cherishes an ideal old Rome ; and to Antony a few intense hours with Cleopatra empty Rome of significance. No man is free from this tendency to value one thing over others. If I fail to explain a poem I am unhappy ; my neighbour does not care two straws for poetry, but if you say his elephant is not beautiful, he will suffer pangs of misery. Different men garner up their hearts in different objects. The peculiarity of the tragic hero is that, when the choice is thrust upon him, he has the courage to choose. What man, having entered politics, has not at some moment or other stood up for a principle and said, 'No compromise, no surrender' ? But then come practical considerations, private ambitions, and time with its irony. He does not become a Brutus ; life tames him. Since the world of relative values affords no scope, the character who aspires is tragic, whether he fails like Brutus or succeeds like Faustus. The average man yields to the world's sway ; the tragic hero obeys the law of his own being.

II

The conduct of the tragic hero is therefore felt to be inevitable. If we feel that the hero could, or should, have acted otherwise, the dramatic illusion is broken and sympathy fails ; but we do not because he is our own potential self growing under ideal conditions. Aesthetic identification precludes judgment*.

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* Critics like Gervinus, Rotscher, Ulrici, Heraud and others who find moral teaching are as much in the wrong as critics like Tolstoy who are indignant, finding no teaching.

Sympathy with the tragic hero cannot be circumscribed by the rule that the tragic trait is 'not sheer depravity but some error or some frailty.' If Richard III is not to be called villain, the word must be deleted from the dictionary. Brutus was not the victim of error: given the same choices he would again choose as he did ; nor can we attribute frailty to him unless by frailty is meant an inflexible will aiming at high principles. When we blame Brutus we judge by results, and if judgment by results is valid, the very conception of tragedy becomes absurd. 'Those misguided and unhappy formalists who accuse Desdemona of untruth should be forbidden to read Shakespeare.'

That tragic heroes acknowledge the justice of their fate does not mean that the punishment is just. Brutus's anxiety is no more a proof of guilt than Antony's self-complacency after pricking names and tampering with Caesar's will is a proof of innocence. Hamlet at the sight of Fortinbras accuses himself because every man is constantly comparing himself with others and wondering whether he is not burying the one talent. Hamlet yields to that mood, but he also knows that it is both unjust and absurd to waste two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats to debate the question of a straw. 'When he accuses himself he does not deserve the least credence.'

The remarks of others must be still more misleading because they take the external view,* which is diametrically opposed to the tragic, and that view is further distorted by report and coloured by prejudice. The talk of the gardeners in *Richard II* is society's view based on rumour. Tragedy is the expression of the universal unuttered complaint, 'The people among whom I live neither understand nor appreciate me. '

The tragic trait is not an obsession which 'upsets the balance and betrays life to evil.' Nor is it a weakening of the sense of reality. When Nelson was asked not to risk his life and England's by wearing the stars, he replied : 'In honour I gained them ; in honour I will die with them.' We do not call him mad. Again, the test of sanity is whether one's world corresponds to reality, and reality is that which is beautiful and good always and everywhere. The so-called grasp of facts is the consistent refusal to recognize reality. To Polonius the court of Denmark is the world, and he is the greatest courtier in it. He provides his son with a complete chart of life, reveals to Reynaldo how 'we of wisdom' find directions out, and offers his throat to be cut if his theory of Hamlet's insanity proves wrong. Is he saner than Hamlet, who sees more in man and nature than can old man who, for the privilege of smiling, bowing, meddling, and flattering an incestuous murderer, has renounced his spiritual growth, far more mad than the strong man of character who lives his own life ? Tahjuddin the saint performed miracles, and officers of the Indian Medical Service certified him insane ! Brutus failed because he had a faculty which is not needed for the struggle on the plane of the brute, but which mankind will have to develop if the race is to survive. Hamlet has had dreams, and he strains at environment as a calf strains at the rope towards its mother.

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* For example, Schucking accepts "the view of Laertes " that Hamlet's intentions towards Ophelia are dishonourable (*Character Problems*, 68).

III

If a story begins, 'There was a man who could not endure noise', we should be disappointed with the sequel if circumstances did not combine to play upon this weakness*. The tragic hero being sensitive, it is only fitting that chance should single out him and his vulnerable point. He could have stood any other test.

Had it pleased heaven
To try me with affliction. . . .
I should have found in some part of my soul
A drop of patience . . . . . .
But there, where I have garnered up my heart,
Where either I must live or bear no life,
The fountain from the which my current runs
Or else dries up ; to be discarded thence !

(*Othello*, IV. ii. 46-60.)

The cursed spite of Fate thrusts upon each hero just the task for which he is unfit. Richard II, Hamlet and Brutus have to

Seek into myself
For that which is not in me.

(*Julius Caesar*, I. ii. 64.)

Had Coriolanus been born in any other town, or in Rome itself at any other time, or as the son of any other mother than Volumnia, he would have been the happy idol of the people. 'Hamlet in Othello's place or Othello in Hamlets' would not have been tragic, nor would Hamlet have been tragic if the trial had come 'at any other time and in any other circumstances.'

Whether the sensitiveness and the fatality that pitches upon it are conventional or not is hard to determine. Often in life we see a woman with an overwhelming maternal instinct. Nature first blesses her with angelic young ones, and then takes them away one after another. Romeo the Unlucky and Jude the Obscure walk the streets today. Yet the Immanent Will has no hostile design ; it is only our sensitiveness that makes us feel we are Time's laughing-stocks.

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* Ben Jonson—*Silent Woman*.

> A fixed figure for the time of scorn
> To point his slow unmoving finger at.

The pattern we discover is projected by our mind. The tragic hero embodies our own sensitiveness ; the isolation of his tragic trait is the organization of our mind round one particular centre. All events, all characters and all talk have a bearing on the hero's tragic trait. We call this atmosphere. If we analyse our own experience when a wicked thought rises in the mind, we shall find that the darkness in Macbeth is a psychological truth*. Romeo, Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, each recognizes that Fate calls out ; and that Fate is in the mind. As a painter makes the background dim to indicate that tears dim Shakuntala's vision, so the atmosphere pervading each play indicates the nature of the hero's passion. The other traits of the tragic hero's character are organized round this centre and lit up partially like the planets. Hamlet was an all-round accomplished prince, Othello a general whom passion could not shake, Richard II a man of action ; and just before death these qualities reappear ; but the normal self of the tragic hero does not come within our purview. We see an eclipse so complete that Lodovico asks, 'Is this the noble Moor ?' Ophelia weeps over Hamlet's change ; and Enobarbus discovers that Antony is not himself. The momentary glare of this volcanic eruption reveals a little of the past, and that little not only serves to make the present stand out in bold relief but also accounts for the fatal predisposition : Othello's birth and breeding in countries where eunuchs guard harems, Macbeth's position in the Highlands where kingship is like Godhead, Lear's long rule during which he was shut off from the world by flatterers, the supposed descent of Brutus, the early training of Coriolanus. More than this none need know.

IV

Our picture of the tragic hero or the tragic trait at the centre and the other characters or traits at the circumference is static. Let us think in terms of the process rather than of the product, for the isolation of the tragic trait is a vital adaptation. Men are of two kinds : one strikes root, the other spreads on the surface ; one seeks value, the other comfort. The following is from one of the daily papers : ' Wanted a well-connected Mathur bride, young and handsome, knowing English, Hindi, Music, needlework and household management, and able to help bridegroom to go to England for higher studies.' The applications, presumably will be marked like answer books Question I, good connexions—10 marks out of 20 ; Question II, beauty—5 out of 10 ; and so on. And then he will strike the average and open negotiations with that father-in-law who can best promote his manifold aims. This young man is not likely to steal a risky interview with Juliet, or to be beckoned back from Oxford by a cablegram from Cleopatra. When he is a Civil Servant, even if he catches his wife in a compromising situation, he will continue to take her to banquets ; he will not return alone to strangle her in bed and kill himself. He will keep up appearances because all his interests are on the surface. He hangs to life by many threads. The average man balances many interests ; he reconciles love of God and love of gain, duty to nation and duty to self, by a simple method : he ignores the conflict. If his wife and his mother have fallen out, he will reconcile his duties by continuing to live in the same house with both until they poison each other and both are dead.

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* "The atmosphere of the play is night—a night of horror and despair—and this night is only a reflection, a symbol as it were, of the terrible darkness that inhabits Macbeth's spirit." —Dover Wilson's *Six Tragedies*, 28.

There is a time in the life of the tragic hero when he foresees no conflict ; when Coriolanus by pleasing himself can also please his mother and his country, when Timon can believe that man is grateful by nature. Then comes the rift ; he cannot accept a compromise for the sake of comfort. At each step he makes a deliberate choice. Hamlet wipes off old records and attachments. There is nothing in common between this and the neurotic's loss of interest in life. Hamlet realizes the relative worth of other people's interests, the desire for martial glory for instance, and even keeps himself in continual practice ; but he also looks beneath the plausible appearance of things and discovers that they have no value to satisfy the soul. He does not withdraw into his hardened shell like a snail ; his spirit reaches out until the universe is a prison. This is not the egoistic craving for power. Kingship and revenge will not satisfy him. Since life has no ultimate purpose, nothing in life can have meaning any more. Othello cannot return to war, Coriolanus to Rome, Timon to Athens, Hamlet to Wittenberg, or Lear to the throne. Thus, as the tragic hero progresses, desire after desire is eliminated. This is the isolation of the tragic trait.

The elimination of impulses may be viewed as the elimination of hindrances. Macbeth being heir-presumptive, his ambition did not conflict with his desire for honour, love and friendship. When

Malcolm was born, he reconciled his desires in the conventional way by deciding nothing. The strongest motive of ordinary conduct is an unwillingness to run risks. The immediate effect of the Witches' prophecy is to strengthen this policy of drift ; but this is only the apparent result, the real is just the reverse. Like many a man in India who acts according to the horoscope, Macbeth feels that he has sanction to aim at the crown, and that he is sure to win. When Malcolm is nominated heir-apparent, Macbeth does not let 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would.' In his soliloquy he takes it for granted he will be king. He is only thinking of the effect on the loyalty that his subjects will show to him in future For him to desecrate kingship is as hard as for a man to defame the girl he wishes to marry. In the presence of his wife this subtle sentiment also disappears and the choice is made. The main checks are removed. What remains is the fear of public opinion. After his behaviour in the presence of Banquo's ghost there is no more need to fear exposure. The only deterrent now left is the fear of insecurity. The second prophecy removes that too. The last wall is down.

This isolation of the tragic trait means the isolation of the tragic hero also. Men are isolated to the extent that their worlds differ. Tragic intensity being one-sided, the hero lives in a world which progressively loses points of contact with the world of others. The paths of life diverge, and yet the desire that separates men is not in itself a desire for separation. Ambition, whether criminal or virtuous, is social. Alexander Selkirk did not care for his kingship. If Macbeth dreamed of the crown, it was because he had noted how Duncan was loved and venerated by all. Macbeth's isolation begins when he stands rapt while Banquo, Ross and Angus converse apart. When he appears before the king he is in a false position and utters laboured speeches because he is no longer merely one of the courtiers. The horror of loneliness is intense in the scene after the murder, when he begins to drift even from his wife. The second prophecy of the witches marks him out from mortals ; the bond between him and mankind is snapped. Finally, even the death of his dearest love cannot move him. Thus Macbeth's ambition to win 'honour, love, obedience, troops of friends' led him to the most complete and tragic isolation. The irony of the business of life is awful to contemplate.

V

Loneliness is the essence of tragic suffering. Life is an urge towards mutual communion ; its defeat is pain. That mortal millions live alone is the tragic fact. Like cold hard icebergs, we who are composed of, submerged in, and propelled by the same element remain separated by the unplumbed salt estranging sea ; or meet now and then only to clash. Even love does not melt and unite us. After elopement and years of conjugal felicity a man and his Desdemona may still be strangers to each other, and the slightest misunderstanding may take them to the divorce court. ✓ Shakespeare's tragic heroes are set against a hostile background because they are lonely of heart ; they are generally kings because 'unlimited authority is isolation.' Richard III, Richard II and Macbeth feel that nobody loves them. Coriolanus gives up, one after another, plebeians, patricians, and Rome ; and the Volsces give him up. He lives as if he were the author of himself. Antony abandons friends, followers, and wife for Cleopatra, whose soul and his never mingle. 'Brutus—and this is the deep tragedy of the play—far apart from the rest, in his own ideal world, thinks, stands, lives and dies alone*. 'Hamlet's tragedy is really the tragedy of loneliness.'

At times the hero perceives how much he has drifted, and struggles desperately to re-establish communion with some kindred soul at least. Hamlet makes a passionate appeal to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, in his desire to bridge the gulf, he calls Gertrude 'mother', but the gulf widens and he calls her 'madam.' His talk with Osric 'adds a last touch of pathos to the loneliness of Hamlet.' Lear overcomes his pride and complains to Regan like a child. Antony breaks his Egyptian fetters. But these frantic struggles are vain. ✓The truth is, tragic suffering can be neither shared or alleviated. Ophelia, Horatio, Lady Macbeth and Portia are helpless spectators. None can understand how ill all is in Hamlet's heart. The cup cannot pass from him.

It is the tragic trait that makes such exquisite pain possible. Marlowe subjected his Edward II to physical torture, Shakespeare in *Richard II* depicted none ; Marlowe led the way to a blind alley but Shakespeare did not follow. To heap physical horror on horror is a poor and unsafe method, for the proportion between the effect gained and the means employed must dwindle in course of time. It is like the giant ape of the films. The dramatist who shows physical pain necessarily draws our attention away from the far more excruciating torture of the spirit. The body is what man has in common with the animal and the plant, but the tragic trait is the monopoly of the sensitive soul. The snow-storm on the heath is not so unendurably cold as Regan. Earthquakes are not more painful than heart-quakes. It was a sight to see the men of Bihar whose palatial houses had fallen and whose fruitful fields had been turned to a sandy desert bear it with cheerful courage. One perceived a flush of joy on their noble features when they saw relief workers fresh from the prisons, and when they heard that, even from far-off London, sympathy was pouring in. The earth continued to shake, but it did not shake their faith in man. We have built our faith on man, not on dust. The weak point of our defence is there, and it is there that the spirit of tragedy delivers the assault. Hence the economy of tragic art. Urged by ministers on grounds of policy, Gertrude re-marries ; and Hamlet meditates suicide ! Though Coriolanus has insulted the people, they vote for him ; yet he writhes in agony.

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* Stopford Brooke—*Ten More Plays*, 61.

> Better it is to die, better to starve,
> Than crave the hire which first we do deserve.

The tragic hero cannot endure the presence of what is opposed to the ideal he stands for. Claudius typifies the beastliness against which Hamlet's nature rises up in passionate revolt. We may regard the emotional history of the tragic hero as the outcropping of the unconscious.

VI

The disturbing factor is already within, slumbering unsuspected. Why should Hamlet contract the habit of generalizing facts into ideas if he has not begun to feel the evanescence of facts ? Why should Timon test gratitude ? Or Othello repeat he deserves Desdemona ? The faintest hint is enough to work like a hypnotic suggestion. Iago's repetitions, gestures and serpent-glance cast a powerful spell. The suggestion always comes when the hero is in a receptive condition : Macbeth is intoxicated with victory, Hamlet is in mourning.

The subsequent state of the hero resembles intoxication and other states when the unconscious invades the conscious mind. The drunkard has no sense of direction in time or space ; he doubts whether morning is not evening, whether east is not west, and whether his right hand is not the left.* He talks to his body as to a second person and sometimes doubts his own identity. The tragic hero also lives in a phantasma, confuses dates and places, and doubts :

> I will not swear these are my hands.
>
> (*Lear*, IV. vii. 55.)

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* *Othello*, II, iii, 119.

The outward marks of brooding are remarkable. Hamlet walks for hours together in the lobby, Antony and Brutus in the garden. The sigh of Hamlet puzzles Ophelia, the facial changes of Macbeth and Brutus alarm their wives. They repeat words mechanically, and, even when attentive, the better portion of the mind is elsewhere. Listless they all are. 'No matter' is their favourite phrase. Their minds are caught up in thick-coming fancies which gallop unchecked with amazing rapidity. There is no distinguishing between stimuli coming from outside and those coming from within[*]. Macbeth does not recognize the knocking at the gate. Romeo's mind is clouded.

> Said he not so, or did I dream it so,
> Or am I mad hearing him talk of Juliet?

No control is possible because personality has been almost washed away by the impersonal flood. Antony feels he is a changing cloud, Richard II doubts his identity, and Hamlet does not know himself or his mind. Hamlet does not remember that he has slain Laertes' father. He forgets the ghost. Forgetting is part of the protective mechanism of the mind. The tragic hero suffers because the mechanism breaks down: what he has lost is not mere enjoyment but value. If a man's wife is dead he may revisit the scenes of their honeymoon, but if she has been divorced, every association is painful. He will try to forget. If, however, the attachment persists in spite of disgust, forgetting becomes impossible and an obsession develops. Othello's mind is perpetually threading a labyrinth and, whichever direction it takes, the painful fact meets it face to face. During one brief conversation,[†] Othello forgets the handkerchief over and over again, so that remembrance puts him to exquisite torture. Hamlet, Lear, Timon, Coriolanus and Richard II suffer thus. There is no escape from pain.

The tragic hero cannot forget the unnecessary nor remember the necessary things. This is the secret of his maladaptation to environment. "The cerebral mechanism is arranged just so as to drive back into the unconscious almost the whole of the past and to admit beyond the threshold only that which can cast light on the present situation."[‡] This makes purposive activity possible. But, in the tragic hero, the unconscious crosses the threshold. His words and actions are not calculated to conquer his surroundings. It is not to serve any distinct purpose that your neighbour creates a scene : his son's marriage is over, his caste lost for ever. The old man indulges in a bit of self-revelation when he cries out, 'Don't come before me again in this life. I cannot endure your presence.' The tragic hero also cannot endure something ; and his thoughts, words and actions reveal it. Hamlet's assumed madness serves no other purpose.

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[*] The voice in Macbeth's son.

[†] *Othello*, IV, i, 10-20.

[‡] Bergson—*Creative Evolution*.

The tragic hero cannot endure the very thought of the object of his disgust. When the hero is unable to give vent to this accumulated feeling, it swells in his heart :

> O, me ! my heart, my rising heart ! But down !
>
> (*Lear*, II. iv. 122.)
>
> Swellest thou, proud heart ?
>
> (*Richard II*, III. iii. 138.)
>
> Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart
> Too great for what contains it.
>
> (*Coriolanus*, V. vi. 102.)
>
> O fie ! Hold, my heart !
> And you, my sinews, grow not instant old.
>
> (*Hamlet*, I. v. 93.)

To hold his tongue is to break his heart. When Hamlet feigns madness he acknowledges a fact ; the barrier between thought and word has already broken down. His wit is biting because he cannot help it. When he says

> It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf.

He is only opening a safety valve of suppressed emotion.

> Into my grave ?
>
> (IV. ii. 210.)

'strikes a chill into the hearer and opens up the depths of misery in Hamlet's soul.'

> Being once chafed he cannot
> Be reined again to temperance.

Hamlet gives way to no less than seven outbursts. He tries in vain to stop. Coriolanus loses the consulship, because he cannot hold his peace :

> This is my speech and I will speak it again.
>
> (*Coriolanus*, III. i. 62.)

His banishment and death are due to similar uncontrollable outbursts. The whirl of images makes expression turbid. At times the mind's repulsion prevents direct expression of ideas.

> Heaven stops the nose at it and the moon winks,
>
> (*Othello*, IV. ii. 76.)
>
> Such an act
>
> (*Hamlet*, III. iv. 40.)

The unconscious invading the region of action is marked by the same peculiarities. Richard III and Macbeth put on armour before it is needed, strike and scold messengers, and escape becoming abnormal by plunging into mad activity. Antony whips Thyreus and Hamlet loses control of his actions so completely that he rationlizes his conduct by believing in a providence acting through him.

If madness is "that state in which a person utters words and executes actions which spring not from his reason but from a part of his brain which has gained dominance over his other faculties,"* then tragic heroes are mad. But where is the man who is sane ?† Tragedy presents the eruption of 'the suppressed madness of sane men.' What was within came out, what was visible is covered. You scarcely recognise your neighbour now.

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* Nicoll—*Studies in Shakespeare.*

† Madness is a relative term. Refer Quiller-Couch's *Shakespeare's workmanship* 187-927 Men of genius mad. Brooke's *Ten More Plays*, 96, J. F. Nisbet's *Insanity of Genius* ; Schopenhauers' *The World as will*, III, 155; Murry's *Discoveries*, 33; Trench's *Hamlet*, 239.

13. KALIPADA MUKHERJEE

[This forty-five year old son of Bengal is yet another Indo-English writer of established reputation of whom we may well feel proud. Born at Rajgram, Bankura, in 1900, he graduated with Honours in English from the Wesleyan College, Bankura, where he was a favourite student of Prof. Edward Thompson, the well-known English author and friend of India. Afterwards he passed the M.A. examination of the University of Calcutta with distinction. He has since devoted his life to educational and literary work. In his own language he is a poet and prose-writer of great versatality. English translations of many of his original Bengali poems and literary essays have been published in journals. When Mr. Mukherjee was barely twenty-two years old, Rabindranath Tagore said of his poems that they belonged to the first order and that they showed genius. On hearing this, Prof. Edward Thompson wrote to the young poet : " This is more than I have known him (Tagore) say of any one else's verse." And Prof. Thompson himself felt that in course of time Mr. Mukherjee would " make additions of permanent value to his own literature both in poetry and criticism." Since then Mr. Mukherjee has travelled far on the road to literary success. Some of his books relating to Bengali literature and culture—like *New Light on Tagore, Some Aspects of Bengali Literature, Life and Work of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee*, and *The Flute of Krishna*—have already appeared in important Indian journals. His *Studies in Bengali Literature* (The Sea-songs of C. R. Das, The Poetry of Kamini Roy, and Self-Dedication by Vidyapati) was published in 1938 by Arthur H. Stockwell Ltd., London.

In the sphere of Indo-English criticism Mr. Mukherjee has chosen a special branch for his devoted study. He deals chiefly with English poets and their connections with India. This is indeed a difficult field of work—involving much research, careful investigation and authentic correlation of facts. Even so, Mr. Mukherjee has covered much ground. He has already traced the influence of this country on the work of Shakespeare, Landor, Cowper, Byron and Milton. All these essays are soon to be collected in a volume entitled—" English Poets and India." I have no hesitation in believing that Mr. Mukherjee's carefully documented work throws much new light on the English poets he has dealt with, and is a luminous landmark in Indo-English criticism. The present essay on Shelley (which originally appeared in The *New Review* (Calcutta) for Feb. 1943) is a part of this work of Mr. Mukherjee—and bears testimony to his brilliant intellectual qualities, his faculty for correlation of facts, and his power of interpretation.]

SHELLEY AND INDIA

Nothing can be more interesting to the student of English literature than to know that Shelley, 'the visionary and unearthly man,' in the September of 1821, was contemplating coming out to India not as a tourist desirous of sight-seeing, but on the prospect of obtaining some employment here.

On page 438 in Vol. II of Prof. Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, we read :

> In September, he wrote to enquire of Peacock, now a clerk in the East India Company's service, whether there were any prospect or possibility of his obtaining a diplomatic appointment at the court of some native prince. Peacock's answer, that such employment was reserved for the regular servants of the Company, speedily put an end to Shelley's idle hopes.

He had lavished his means in acts of generosity not always prudent and well-considered, and was then being assailed by 'every respectable person in England' with the most infamous and calumnious accusations 'as the monster of immorality and atheism.' From pages 74 and 75 of Vol. I in the same book we learn that even while a student at Oxford, Shelley read eagerly the marvellous tales of Eastern travellers, but as for Oriental tongues, he contented himself with observing that the appearance of the characters was curious. Yet, he was at one time about to learn Arabic as he wrote to Claire Clairmont from Pisa on October 29, 1820, inspired probably by Southey's Arabic poem 'Thalaba.'

But was Shelley like Cowper,* Southey, and Byron† ever interested in India ? That is a question hard to answer now. We shall, therefore, deal here with all references to India and Indian scenes that are in his works ; and shall incidentally notice the books touching India, which he is known to have read and whose influence is discernible in his poetry.

Writing about Shelley's *Queen Mab*, Prof. Saintsbury remarked : 'That poem is no doubt to a certain extent modelled upon Southey, specially upon Kehama, much more than on Thalaba, despite the superficial resemblance of rhymelessness.' From this we can easily know that Southey was an early favourite of Shelley. Those two long poems of Southey, the one published in 1810, and the other in 1801, are, as we all know, on Oriental subjects, the one Indian and the other Arabic, the notes appended to them showing that they were both based on immense reading with a well nigh medieval diligence characteristic of the poet. It is therefore undoubtedly true to say that Shelley's earliest acquaintance with Indian thought came through his early studies in Southey's verse. That Southey was his friend and 'kind entertainer' at Keswick in Cumberland and that *The Curse of Kehama* was a favourite poem of Shelley, we can all know from Prof. Dowden's life of the poet.

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* Cowper and India—*The Indian Review*—June, 1935—by Kalipada Mukherjee, M. A.
† Byron and India—*The Indian Review*—December, 1936—by Kalipada Mukherjee, M. A.

An Irish journalist, Peter Finnerty, we read in it, who had suffered imprisonment and pillory for his criticisms of the government at Dublin Castle in 1797, was again in prison in 1811. A subscription was opened for the benefit of the journalist; and Shelley sent the third guinea to the fund raised. Not only that, but Shelley perhaps hastily wrote a poem dealing with public affairs under the title 'A Poetical Essay on the Existing State of Things, by a Gentleman of the University of Oxford,' which was issued to assist Finnerty in prison. It had the following motto from Kehama:

> And Famine at her bidding wasted wide
> The wretched land, till in the public way
> Promiscuous where the dead and dying lay,
> Dogs fed on human bones in the open light of day!

Prof. Saintsbury described *Queen Mab* (1803) as crude but absolutely original. Crude it was to a certain extent; but, certainly it was not absolutely original. The motive of Shelley's poem may have been different from that of Southey's; but 'the sails were the same and the wind that impelled them was also the same.' What Prof. Saintsbury did not know or did not notice like many other English and European critics, was the great influence exerted on both Southey and Shelley by the Indian movement introduced by Sir William Jones and other early Indologists as one of the main currents of Nineteenth Century English Poetry.*

When we read *Queen Mab*, we should remember that very probably the poet had read Sir William Jones's *Palace of Fortune* in Chalmers's *Works of the English Poets* (Vol. XVIII),† before he composed his own poem. That is also the guess of E. Koeppel (Englische Studien, Bd. 28.). In his poem, Jones describes the adventures of

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*In Chap. VII on 'The Novel since 1850, in his 'History of Nineteenth Century Literature' (1910), Prof. Saintsbury, however, mentions that there appeared a group of novelists...who exemplified to a great extent the special tendencies of the time, one of these being connected with 'the change effected in the East by the removal, gradual for sometime, then rapid and complete after the Indian Mutiny, of the power of the East India Company.'

† Published in 1810; named 'Collections of the British Poets' in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. X. Ed. by S. Lee.

Young Maia, fairest of blue-eyed maids,
That rov'd at noon in Tibet's musky shades.

Then a goddess, gliding in a golden car, descends upon the flowery lawn and carries the unhappy Maia into the fairy palace. Maia falls asleep in the golden car : and she is awakened by the goddess in a splended garden and introduces herself to Maia, as the one from whom 'all joys, all earthly blessings flow' and who 'rules the various thoughts of mankind.'

All the particulars of his introductory stanzas like the sleeping maiden, the descent of the queen of the spirits in her pearly and pellucid car, the revelation of the supernatural apparition who also declares that she knows all the thoughts of mankind, the favour bestowed upon Ianthe, and the removal of the maiden's soul to the cloud-palace, Shelley must have found in Jones's poem. He may have been influenced to some extent by Volney's *Les Ruines* as pointed out by Kellner in Englische Studien, Bd. 22 S. 9 ff. ; Shelley certainly found the two female figures of the Fairy Queen and of Ianthe in Jones's poem, where the spirits attending upon the Queen are often mentioned as fairies. In the French book, these are nowhere mentioned. Examples of similarities are given below :

The fairy band their shining pinions spread.
(*Works of Sir Wm. Jones*, Vol. IV, p. 412.)

And, as she passed, the fairies homage paid. (*Ibid.* p. 414).
Around the throne in mystic order stand
The fairy train. (*Ibid.* p. 414).

The following similarities in thought and expression also are to be noted :

Jones : The goddess still with looks divinely fair,
Surveys the sleeping object of her care.
Shelley : Long did she gaze, and silently,
Upon the slumbering maid.

Jones : And thus in sounds, the favour'd mortals hear,
She gently whispers . . .

Shelley : And the clear silver tones,
As thus she spoke, were such
As are unheard by all but gifted ear.

Jones : The goddess . . .
Thrice waved her silver wand, and spoke aloud.

Shelley : The Fairy Queen descended,
And thrice she waved her wand
As thus she spoke.

The two poems, though different in all other respects, present these coincidences. Yet we have to remember that the main attraction of Shelley's poem which, in its prelude and the introduction of the Fairy Queen and her aerial voyage and her palace of clouds, has been inspired by Sir William Jones's *Palace of Fortune.**

We have already noticed that *The Curse of Kehama* was one of Shelley's favourite poems. Probably he heard the name of Sir William Jones for the first time from one of his literary friends. But we may be sure that he read of the work of Jones for the first time in the Preface to *The Curse of Kehama*, where Southey refers to 'that mythology which Sir William Jones had been the first to introduce into English poetry.' On page 158 of Dowden's Life, we read further : 'Before leaving Cuckfield for Field Place in the beginning of June 1811, Shelley placed a copy of *The Curse of Kehama*, his favourite poem, and a copy of Ensor's *National Education* in Captain Pilfold's hands to be lent to Miss Hitchener, and wrote to London ordering for her a copy of Locke—it was important that she should study Locke's argument against innate ideas.' That Shelley's regard for Southey was very great, we can all know from Shelley's letter to Miss Hitchener, dated December 26, 1811, in which he writes : 'You may conjecture that a man must possess high and estimable qualities if, with the prejudices of such total differences from my sentiments, I can regard him great and worthy. In fact, Southey is an advocate of liberty and equality. He looks forward to a state when all shall be perfected, and matter become subjected to the omnipotence of mind. But he is now an advocate for existing establishments. He says he designs his three statues in *Kehama* to be contemplated with republican feelings, but not in this age.'

Another diligent student of Oriental literature of the time was Thomas Moore, the Irish poet, whose *Lalla Rookh* published in 1817, satisfied the popular taste for long poems, created by Scott and Byron, and became 'very popular and very profitable.' This poem also was 'somewhat overburdened with the then fashionable deck cargo of erudite or would-be erudite notes.' What is of interest to us in this connection is that Moore is reputed to have read about seventy-five books on Eastern subjects towards the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. This shows clearly that many books on Eastern subjects were at the time available in England and that some of these were so very interesting that they attracted the attention of many literary men. Miss Conant in her *Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century* observed : ' As Allan Ramsay and Thompson prepared the way for Burns and Wordsworth, so less obviously but nonetheless truly, the translators and writers of the oriental tale, together with the historians and travellers, were that forerunners of Southey, Moore, Byron, Matthew Arnold, Fitzgerald and many others, on to Kipling in the present day.'

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* I am indebted to Dr. Durgaprasanna Raychoudhury's "Sir William Jones and his Translation of Kalidasa's Sakuntala" for this information.

We cannot now know the names of all the books on India that Shelley read : but it is certain that he read some of the most interesting books on India then available in England. One such was Moore's *Hindu Pantheon** mentioned along with others recommended for his study by his philosophic guide Godwin, which he requested Hookham about December 10, 1812, to send him.

In the list of books read by Mary and Shelley in 1814 (from Mary Shelley's Manuscript), we find the following on Indian and other Oriental subjects :

> Curse of Kehama, Thalaba, by Southey.
> The Empire of the Nairs by Sir James Lawrence.
> Moore's Journal (by Dr. John Moore).
> Barrow's Embassy to China.

From the list of books read by Shelley in 1816, we know that Shelley read at the time also Park's *Journal of a Journey in Africa*, thereby showing his interest in all the accounts of Park's travels. On page 183 of Dowden's Life, we read that on Thursday February 12, 1817, Shelley goes to the India Library and Panorama of Rome (Mary's Journal). On Page 185, we come to know that Shelley read in the original Greek Arrian's *Historia Indica*, and also Elphinstone's *Embassy to Cabul.* Though we cannot now get the names of all the books read by the Poet, we may be sure that he read many more on India : or he got much valuable information about India from Southey's *Kehama*, Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh*,† and the copious notes appended to both the poems, and from Jones's *Works* which were collected and edited by Lord Teignmouth‡ in 1799.

On page 346 of Prof. Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, we read :

> Or he bends over a poison-berried plant, fair in leaf and stem, and moralizes it into many meanings. Or the sea-wind

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* Shelley probably read of the book for the first time in Southey's Notes to Kehama.

† Read by Shelley in 1817, the year of its publication.

‡ As Sir John Shore he was Governor-General of India from 1790 to 1798.

blows on his breast and in his hair, and he prolongs his pleasure by transmuting it into the gladness of an imagined lover waiting for the breeze to blow her true-love to her arms. Other poems express the ardour of his affection for Harriet, and in these there is a spiritual quality not always to be found in poetry which tells of the passion of boy and girl. She who is dear to him can be dear only because she is her purer soul, and the meeting of eyes, the touch of lips, are precious because these are occasions and emblems of the union of two ardent spirits panting together after high ends. In contrast with such hymns of love as these, Shelley sings of the savage solitude and isolation of the wretch who cannot love his fellows :

> Not the swarth Pariah in some Indian grove,
> Lone, lean, and haunted by his brother's hate,
> Hath drunk so deep the cup of bitter fate.

And his own sympathies flow forth at the thought of the wrongs and woes of men, at the imagined sight of womanhood in anguish and despair, at some tale from real life of the sorrows of the oppressed poor. And he sings a chant of freedom and hope—

> Then may we hope the consummating hour,
> Dreadfully, swiftly sweetly, is arriving,
> When light from darkness, peace from desolation,
> Bursts unresisted.

In his Letter to Maria Gisborne, written about 1820, we find Shelley thinking of India, when he wrote the following lines :

> The silk-worm in the dark green mulberry leaves
> His winding sheet and cradle ever weaves.
>
> .. .. ..
>
> He* is a pearl within an oyster shell,
> One of the richest of the deep ;—and there
> Is English Peacock, with his mountain Fair,
> Turned into a Flamingo ;—that shy bird
> That gleams i' the Indian air—have you not heard
> When a man marries, dies, or turns Hindoo,
> His best friends hear no more of him ?

In *The Daemon of the World* written in 1816, we find that Shelley has used the phrase 'barbaric gold.' But it is clearly adapted from Milton's 'barbaric pearl and gold,' which occurs in the following opening lines of Book II of *Paradise Lost* :

> High on a throne of royal state, which far
> Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
> Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
> Show'rs on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,
> Satan exalted sat . . .

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* Hogg.

Next we find that in *Alastor* or *The Spirit of Solitude* published in the same year, Shelley writes :

The Poet wandering on through Arabie
And Persia, and the wild Carmanian waste,
And o'er the aerial mountains which pour down
Indus and Oxus from their icy caves,
In joy and exultation held his way ;
Till in the vale of Cashmire, far within
Its loneliest dell, where odorous plans entwine—
Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower,
Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched
His languid limbs . . .

After all his wanderings, here did the Poet sleep, and

A vision in his sleep
There came, a dream of hopes that never yet
Had flushed his cheek. He dreamed a veiled maid
Sate near him, talking in low solemn tones.
His voice was like the voice of his own soul
Heard in the calm of thought ; its music long,
Like woven sounds of streams and breezes, held
His inmost sense suspended in its web
Of many-coloured woof and shifting hues.

The above description of the beauty of Cashmire must have been inspired by Shelley's acquaintance with any of the following books : Dow's *History of Hindoostan,* in Vol. I of which is a description of the Kingdom of Cashmire—'a terrestrial paradise.' Major James Bennell's *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan or the Mogul Empire.* He may have been inspired by Forster's description of Cashmire* also.

The ninth letter of Bernier written to Mon. De Merveilles, after a residence of three months in Cashmire, contains an accurate description of the Kingdom of Kachemire, 'the present state of the surrounding mountains,' the 'Terrestrial Paradise of the Indies.' Dryden founded his Tragedy of Aurang-Zebe on the English translation of Bernier's Travels (1671-72).

This shows that the glamour of India continued to be on him throughout his poetic career. For we find Shelley thinking of India and giving descriptions of imagined Indian scenery quite in the Shelleyan manner even in *Prometheus Unbound* completed in December 1819 and published early in 1820, which showed 'that one of the greatest lyric poets of the world had been born to England.' Even the first scene in the first act opens in a ravine of 'Icy rocks in the Indian Caucasus.'

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* George Forster visited Cashmire in 1783.

In Greek mythology, Prometheus was a divine personage who, for bringing fire from heaven to man, was punished by Zeus who had him chained to a rock of Mount Caucasus there to suffer eternal torment, an eagle or vulture feeding constantly on his liver. Shelley also pictures Prometheus 'nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain'; but he did not know that Mount Caucasus or rather the Caucasus Mountains have no Indian side and are in Russia far away from India.* If, as Shelley said, 'the bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening of spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication' were the inspiration of his drama, he could not but think of the bright blue sky of India also and of the valley of Cashmire, the lovely 'Emerald set with pearls.'

Prometheus's first speech contains a magnificent description of the imaginary Indian Caucasus, addressing which he says:

. . . Ye Mountains,
Whose many-voiced Echoes, through the mist
Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell!
Ye, icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost
Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept
Shuddering through India! . . . .

And the Second Voice (from the Springs) on hearing him, says:

Never such a sound before
To the Indian waves we bore.
A pilot asleep on the howling sea
Leaped up from the deck in agony,
And heard, and cried, 'Ah, woe is me!'
And died as mad as the wild waves be!

Panthea concludes the First Act with her speech in which she says to Prometheus:

. . . but the eastern star looks white,
And Asia waits in that far Indian vale,
The scene of her sad exile: rugged once
And desolate and frozen like this ravine;
But now invested with fair flowers and herbs,
And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow
Among the woods and waters, from the aether
Of her transforming presence, which would fade
If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell!

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* The description of Prometheus among the icy crags of the imaginary Indian Caucasus was based on the majestic scene Shelley saw from the Valleys of the Alps as (his carriage climbed the steeps beyond Les Echelles.)

And the First scene of Act II opens in the morning on ‘A lovely vale in the Indian Caucasus’; Asia, all alone, speaks and gives a picture of sunrise on the mountains:

> The point of one white star is quivering still
> Deep in the orange light of widening morn
> Beyond the purple mountains; through a chasm
> Of wind-divided mist the darker lake
> Reflects it: now it wanes: it gleams again
> As the waves fade, and as the burning threads
> Of woven cloud unravel in pale air:
> 'Tis lost! and through yon peaks of cloud-like snow
> The roseate sunlight quivers: hear I not
> The Aeolian music of her sea-green plumes
> Winnowing the crimson dawn?

Here Shelley most probably has given an imaginary picture of the vale of Cashmire, then famous in England at least through Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh** which contains glowing pictures of the loveliness of that earthly paradise.

In Section III, Asia again gives a picture of these mountains and says:

> . . . Wonderful!
> Look, sister, ere the vapour dim thy brain:
> Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,
> As a lake, paving in the morning sky,
> With azure waves which burst in silver light,
> Some Indian vale. . . .

In Section III, Act III, occurs this picture of the Indus and its tributaries:

> . . . Run, wayward,
> And guide this company beyond the peak
> Of Bacchic Nysa, Maenad-haunted mountain,
> And beyond Indus and its tribute rivers,
> Trampling the torrent streams and glassy lakes
> With feet unwearied undelaying.
> And up the green ravine, across the vale,
> Beside the windless and crystalline pool,
> Which ever lies, on unerasing waves,
> The image of a temple, built above,
> Distinct with column, arch and architrave,
> And palm-like capital, and overwrought,
> And populous with most living imagery,
> Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles
> Fill the hushed air with everlasting love.

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* This very popular poem was published in 1817. It is in the list of books read by Mary and Shelley in 1817. On Aug. 8, 1817, Shelley wrote to Ollier, "I wish an octavo edition of Moore's new poem to be half-bound for me."—p. 139, Vol. II, Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, 1886.

In *The Witch of Atlas* (August 8, 1820), Shelley compares the many pranks of the lady to those of a tiger on Hydaspes' banks :

On which that lady played her many pranks,
Circling the image of a shooting star,
Even as a tiger on Hydaspes' banks
Outspeeds the antelopes which speediest are,
In her light boat.

Shelley's *Hellas* was written in 1821 and published in 1822. In it Shelley has introduced an Indian as one of the characters. In the *Chorus of Greek Captive Women*, the Poet sings,

We strew these opiate flowers
On they restless pillow,—
They were stripped from Orient bowers,
By the Indian billow.

And the wonderful chants of the captive Greek women mingle with 'the soft lullabies of the Indian slave.'

In the same drama, we find Shelley comparing the ruins of Greece to Orient mountains :

Freedom, so
To what of Greece remaineth now
Returns ; her hoary ruins glow
Like Orient mountains lost in day.

It should be noted here that Shelley very probably came under the influence of the Hindu doctrine of re-incarnation, known also to the ancient Greeks as metempsychosis expounded by Pythagoras himself influenced by Indian thought as observed by Sir William Jones, whose theory was that after death the soul of a man passes into the body of some other man or animal. Plato mentions it in his Republic epitomic of all his philosophy. In his myth of Er, is a picture of the soul's travels after death and return to earth-life after its sojourn in the other world. But the idea as expressed here is not pre-natal, as it is in Plato's own statement that all knowledge is recollection. But nowhere in Greek is the doctrine so clearly defined as in Hindu literature ; and in Hindu Philosophy, it being one of its five principal dogmas. It is highly probable that Shelley read of this in the writings of Orientalists like Wilkins and Jones, especially in the Bhagavad Gita and in Sakuntala. The poet appealed as a re-incarnationist in *Hellas* and in 'To a Lady with a Guitar' published posthumously in 1832, where he pictured himself as the re-incarnation of Ariel, and Mr. and Mrs. Williams as those of Ferdinand and Miranda of Shakespeare's *Tempest*...Even if he did not read the above two books, yet my finding is true, as it is obvious from note No. 7 to Kehama and a subsequent note containing a speech of Kreeshna, both quoted from Wilkins, and on re-incarnation, which Shelley must have read.

One of the most interesting things in the works of Shelley, and one of his five lyrics most frequently set to music, is his *Indian Serenade** published in 1822. In it appears the Poet's liking for the fragrant Indian flower 'champak'† which he never saw, but of which he read either in Sir William Jones's *Botanical Observations on Select Indian Plants* containing a full description of the flower or in Moore's *Lalla Rookh* which contains the following note on it:

> That blue flower which Brahmins say—Blooms nowhere but in Paradise. The Brahmins of this province insist that the blue champak flowers only in Paradise—Sir W. Jones. It appears, however, from a curious letter of the Sultan of Menangeabow, given by Marsden, that one place on earth may lay claim to the possession of it. This is the Sultan who keeps the flower champaka that is blue, and to be found in no other country but his, being yellow elsewhere. (Marsden's *Sumatra*).

In Jones's own note on the flower in the above book, he thus mentions the flower being a favourite of the Sanskrit poets, a fact which no doubt inspired the English poet,—'The strong aromatic scent of the gold-coloured Champak is thought offensive to the bees, who are never seen on its blossoms; but their elegant appearance on the black hair of the Indian woman is mentioned by Rumphius; and both facts have supplied the Sanskrit poets with elegant allusions.'

Written towards the end of his life, Shelley's *Fragments of an Unfinished Drama*, 'an intensely Shelleyan fragment,'‡ is on an Indian Enchantress, showing the Poet's growing liking for Indian subjects. This was published in part by Mrs. Shelley in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824; and again with notes, in P. W., 1839. Lines 127-238 were published by Dr. Garnett under the title of *The Magic Plant* in his *Relics of Shelley*, 1862. The whole was edited in its present form by Mr. W. M. Rossetti in 1870. According to Garnett, the drama was written at Pisa during the late winter or early spring of 1822.

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* The piece appeared in the 'Posthumous Poems', 1824, as 'Lines to an Indian Air'. It appeared in the same year in the second number of the *Liberal* as 'Song written for an Indian Air.'

† The flower as an imaginary one deserved mention in 'Odours and flowers in the Poetry of Shelley' by A. C. Bradley in his 'A Miscellany' (1929), 'though the rose and violet hold unmistakably the place of honour in Shelley's poetry.'

‡ A Miscellany A. C. Bradley.

Mrs. Shelley's note on the drama, written in 1839, is as follows:

> The following fragments are part of a Drama undertaken for the amusement of the individuals who composed our intimate society, but left unfinished. I have preserved a sketch of the story as far as it had been shadowed in the poet's mind.
>
> An Enchantress, living in one of the islands of the Indian Archipelago, saves the life of a pirate, a man of savage but noble nature. She becomes enamoured of him, and he, inconstant to his mortal love, for a while returns her passion; but at length, recalling the memory of her whom he left, and who laments his loss, he escapes from the Enchanted Island, and returns to his lady. His mode of life makes him again go to sea and the Enchantress seizes the opportunity to bring him, by a spirit-brewed tempest, back to her Island.

In one of the scenes of the Drama, the Indian youth questions:

> But, fairest stranger, when didst thou depart
> From the far hills where rise the springs of India?
> How didst thou pass the intervening sea ?

The Lady says in reply:

> If I be sure I am not dreaming
> I should not doubt to say it was a dream.
> Me thought a star came down from heaven,
> And rested mid the plants of India,
> Which I had given a shelter from the frost
> Within my chamber . . .
>   and in place of it
> A soft hand issued from the veil of fire,
> Holding a cup like a magnolia flower,
> And poured upon the earth within the vase
> The element with which it overflowed,
> Brighter than morning light, and purer than
> The water of the springs of Himalah.

Yet not by *Queen Mab* nor even by *Prometheus Unbound* and *Hellas*, but by *Epipsychidion*, his melodious rhapsody of Platonic love, and *Adonais* which shows him as a Pantheist, do we learn the soul of Shelley. 'His soul cannot be labelled ; it is too bright and swift and strange for that. But if some name is to suggest the order of nature to which Shelley belonged, that of Pantheist is the best.'

How was it that the atheist Shelley became a pantheist at least at the time he composed his *Adonais* ? It is hard to know now. In his scornful rejection of Christianity, Shelley's attitude was one with his time, as he was a democrat and communist, while the Church, at his time at least, seemed to side with the aristocracy. Browning, however, suggested quite interestingly that had Shelley lived longer, he would have become a Christian. What he would have really become, no one can now say with any amount of decisiveness. The late Dr. Stopford Brooke in a number of the Hibbert Journal of 1918 wrote about a fragment of an *Essay on Christianity* by Shelley, and by it tried to prove that Shelley whom the world called anti-Christian, 'stands by Christ —a God of Universal love.'*

Whatever might have been his final attitude to Christianity, we cannot but believe that Indian thought, as expressed in the *Bhagavat Gita*† and the *Vedas* as translated into English, exerted a profound influence on Shelley's mind, and made him not only a Pantheist but also God-intoxicated like Spinoza. Let us read the following lines from Stanza LII of Shelley's *Adonais* :

> The One remains, the many change and pass ;
> Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly ;
> Life like a dome of many-coloured glass,
> Stains the white radiance of Eternity.

And then let us compare with them the following Note from Southey's *Kehama* :

> O all-embracing Mind,
> Thou who art everywhere.—

Perhaps it would have been better if I had written 'all-containing mind.'

> 'Even I was even at first. not any other thing ; that which exists, unperceived, supreme : afterwards I am that which is ; and he who must remain, am I.
>
> 'Except the First Cause, whatever may appear, and may not appear, in the mind, know that to be the mind's Maya or delusion, as light, as darkness.
>
> 'As the great elements are in various beings, entering, yet not entering, (that is, pervading, not destroying,) thus am I in them, yet not in them.
>
> 'Even thus far may enquiry be made by him who seeks to know the principle of mind in unison and separation, which must be everywhere, always.'
>
> —Asiatic Researches, from the Bhagavat:
> Sir W. Jones.

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* Noticed in 'Great Thoughts', London, June 15, 1918.

† Translated by Charles Wilkins, and published at the request of Warren Hastings in 1785, with an Introduction by him.

Let us read again the following lines from Stanza LIV of *Adonais* :

> That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
> That Beauty in which all things work and move,
> That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
> Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
> Which through the web of being blindly wove
> By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
> Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
> The fire for which all thirst; . . .

But most important from the comparative point of view are the following lines from Sir William Jones's *Hymns to Indian Deities*,* which we should read very carefully :—

> Delusive pictures, unsubstantial shows !
> My soul absorbed One only being knows,
> Of all perceptions one abundant source,
> Whence every object, every moment flows,
>   Suns hence derive their force,
>   Hence planets learn their course ;
> But suns and fading worlds I view no more ;
> God only I perceive ; God only I adore.

where, in the words of Dr. Gowen, 'there is a fine reproduction, for instance, of the idea of " maya " in the picture of the " mountains whose radiant spires presumptuous rear their summits to the skies," and yet are not.'† Shelley must have read of them for the first time in Southey's notes to *Kehama* where there is a note from Jones's *Hymn to Ganga.*

Then let us read the following Note from Southey's *Kehama* :

> I am the creation and the dissolution of the whole universe. There is not anything greater than I, and all things hang on me, even as precious gems upon a string. I am moisture in the water, light in the sun and moon, invocation in the Veds, sound in the firmament, human nature in mankind, sweet-smelling savour in the earth, glory in the source of light : In all things I am life ; and I am zeal in the zealous ; and know, O Arjoon, that I am the eternal seed of all nature. I am the understanding of the wise, the glory of the proud, the strength of the strong, free from lust and anger ; and in animals I am desire regulated by moral fitness.—Kreeshna, in the Bhagavat-Geeta.

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* These were not only inspired by and based on but were also translated from original Sanskrit texts, and have been called " Hindustani hymns" by Prof. H. Morse Stephens in The Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. X edited by S. Lee. In the words of E. F. Oaten (*Anglo. Indian Literature*), " They represent an honest and by no means unsuccessful attempt to enter fully into the religious life of India." They are on Indra, Suryya, Lakshmi, Narayan, Saraswati, Ganga, Camdeo, Durga and Bhabani, to each of which was added an elaborate argument as an ' explanatory introduction for the benefit of his English readers.'

† *A History of Indian Literature.*—By Herbert H. Gowen.

Let us read also Sir William Jones's rendering and interpretation of 'The Gayatri—the holiest verse of the Vedas,'—

> Let us adore the supremacy of that divine Sun (opposed to the visible luminary), the godhead who illuminates all, who recreates all, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, whom we invoke to direct our understandings aright in our progress towards his holy seat.
>
> What the sun and light are to this visible world, that are the supreme good and truth, to the intellectual and invisible universe ; and, as our corporeal eyes have a distinct perception of objects enlightened by the sun, thus our souls acquire certain knowledge, by meditating on the light of truth, which emanates from the Being of beings : that is the light by which alone our minds can be directed in the path to beatitude.
>
> Without hand or foot he runs rapidly, and grasps firmly ; without eyes he sees, without ears he hears all ; he knows whatever can be known, but there is none who knows him ; Him the wise call the great, supreme, pervading spirit.

Anyone who reads and compares the above extracts carefully, can know what the source of Shelley's pantheism was. Those who know something of the art of poetic creation, can understand that Shelley founded his creed on the above and gave expression to it in his own inimitable manner. Attracted by Southey's quotations from it in *Kehama*, Shelley read Moore's *Hindu Pantheon* also, which must have kindled in his mind a growing interest in Indian religious thought, to satisfy which he must have read at least what he got about it in the works of Sir William Jones.

14. UPENDRA CHANDRA NAG

[With a dignified deportment and poised gait that illustrate the truth of the old saying—Knowledge is proud that she knows so much, wisdom is humble that she knows no more, with a beaming face that reflects the profundity within, and with eyes sparkling perpetually with smiles—he is one who makes you feel that he is a *persona grata,* a plenipotentiary of scholarship ! Serene always, loving and lovable, extremely reserved, generous-natured and kind-hearted—he is one whose intellectual companionship is in itself a liberal education. An eager and devout student of English language and literature, he is a sound scholar in almost all its branches—poetry, drama, fiction, criticism. Conscientious teaching of the subject to college and University students for several years has given him a wonderful mastery over it, and has helped him to probe its depths as well as scale its heights. The critical work he has done in English literature is such as would do credit to any scholar in England. His doctoral thesis on " Poetic Drama of Early Nineteenth Century "—which he completed under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Allardyce Nicoll—is a shining memorial to valuable literary research. Prof. Nicoll himself, in his monumental volumes, frequently quotes from the unpublished thesis of his pupil ! Dr. Nag's interest is not confined—as often it happens in such cases !—to the subject of his thesis. He has said new and enlightening things about Nature in 17th Century English poetry, the minor Elizabethans, the problem of poetry, the theory of comedy and such other subjects of absorbing interest. And on Shakespeare—the ' toughest touchstone of all aspirants to literary fame '—he has done invaluable work which has elicited high encomiums from such established Shakespearean scholars like Bradley, Moulton and Dowden. But Dr. Nag is one who always takes care to hide his light under a bushel ! A seeker of light, he invariably avoids the limelight—even when it comes in search of him ! For a long time Dr. Nag's studies of some of Shakespeare's characters and plays lay uncared for in his dusty files ! The writer of these lines remembers well those winter days and weeks in 1932 when he took the liberty of cajoling and compelling the Doctor-*Saheb* to permit some at least of his essays to see the light of day. It was he who persuaded Dr. Nag to allow him to release " Macbeth : A Character Study "—reproduced here—in the 1932 Nov.-Dec. issue of *Triveni* (Madras). A character study of Lady Macbeth also appeared in one of the subsequent numbers of the same journal. But the Dr.'s study of Banquo still lies hidden among his never well-arranged files !

It was nearly fifty-five years ago that Dr. Nag was born—to be exact, in 1890. He had his education at Dacca, Berhampore, and Calcutta. He passed with distinction the B.A. Honours and M.A. examinations of the University of Calcutta, in 1910 and 1912 respectively. He started his teaching career as lecturer in English at the Government Sanskrit College, Calcutta. After some time he changed over to the Scottish Churches College and then to Vidyasagar College. From here he went over to the Carmichael College at Rangpur—where he acted as Principal for sometime. From 1921 to 1925 he was on the staff of the University of Dacca. In that year he entered the University of London and obtained the Ph.D. degree in English literature from East College (1927). During the two years of his stay here Dr. Nag worked as Lecturer in Bengali at the School of Oriental Studies in the University of London. In 1928 he joined the Benares Hindu University as Professor of English and Head of the Department. Since 1940 he has been the Principal of the Central Hindu College of the B.H.U. For long he has also been associated with many of the North-Indian Universities as member of Faculties and Boards. . . . The generations of students that have passed through Dr. Nag's hands at the various places he has worked still speak gratefully of their associations with him, and of the encouragement and enlightenment they received from him. The Doctor-*Saheb* owes it as a duty to himself and to all those who know his worth—not to allow his writings to be scattered and neglected any longer. Indo-English criticism will treasure his consolidated work as one of its proudest possessions !

The study of the great Shakespearean tragic hero included here is an example of Dr. Nag's brilliant scholarship. There is in it a refreshing originality of interpretation, and a rare refinement of thought and expression.]

MACBETH : A CHARACTER STUDY

It is universally accepted that the personality of Shakespeare is elusive, but attempts have been always made at interpreting some of the great truths that underlie his plays—particularly his tragedies. And such attempts are not always wit upon ill employment, provided we bear in mind that he is many-sided, and that "his mind is not small enough to be comprehended with ease." He is not to be labelled according to any one of his aspects, and ticketed with a comfortably precise description.

Again, though he may not be labelled with a party name, we are not to suppose that he has no distinct and distinctive ideas upon human life. We are to guard against narrowing those ideas to the dimensions of our lesser minds and claiming that he means just what we assert and no more.

We assume then the intelligibility of Shakespeare while bearing in mind his rare comprehensiveness ; we look to him for criticism of life without seeking to force that criticism to the moulds of narrow creeds and dogmas, or to limit to one significance a criticism that may have as may meanings as there are glints of colour in a piece of shot-silk. I shall attempt in my own humble way to record some of the impressions that I have gathered about some of the profoundest thoughts of Shakespeare upon certain aspects of human life as presented in the play of *Macbeth*. *Macbeth* was written at a time when Shakespeare's powers were full-grown, and his knowledge of life and art, mature and deep. We may, therefore, expect to find in it a noble and profound application of his ideas to life. The play is so complex in its dramatic combinations, so rapid in its action that it needs no little effort to keep in view the course of each individual character and to be awake all through to the ethical sense which underlies the whole. But the character and history of Macbeth himself form, as it were, a point of concentration for the various elements of life and character mingled in the play, and if we limit our study, for the present, to the central character of the piece we are, at any rate, at the centre of the poet's thoughts and may hope to catch something of his meaning. There is, however, a view of the play which reduces its criticism of life to a statement, at once meagre and pitiless.

Macbeth is, it is said, a picture of a man goaded on to crime by supernatural agencies, or victimised by the iron-hand of fate —as are the characters of Hardy—from whose grip there could be no escape. If this view of Shakespeare's intention be true, it is obvious that we must abandon much of the hope wherein we have dressed ourselves. The human interest of the play would necessarily decrease, its presentment of life would be merely depressingly barren of all inspiring suggestions, and its author would be setting the seal of his approval upon the pessimism which is reached by Macbeth only in his spiritual paralysis. But it is impossible to accept this view as truly representing Shakespeare's mind. To a man of such intense reality as Shakespeare, to one who had taken life so seriously as Shakespeare had, to one whose genius was so vigorously human as Shakespeare's was, it would have been impossible to revert to a conception possible only to such mind in the ancient days of the Greek drama. The two modes of thought were separated by a gulf of centuries, and Christianity lay between. That the conception is capable of artistic treatment has been shown to the full by Aeschylus and Sophocles. But truth is higher than art, and if Macbeth is an instance of a great character degraded by demon agencies which he could not be expected to resist, we are driven to suppose that Shakespeare was false to himself and to the truth of his experience and that merely to create an artistic effect, he spent his genius upon a history he did not mean to stamp as real and true.

Apart, however, from these considerations, to think thus of the play is to mistake completely the nature and function of the Weird Sisters in *Macbeth.* In this wonderful creation of art. Shakespeare, as has been well said, "took enough of traditionary matter to enlist old credulity in behalf of agents suited to his peculiar purpose ; representing to the age its own thoughts, and at the same time informing that representation with a moral significance suited to all ages alike."* They have, therefore, a literal character drawn from the traditionary and contemporary ideas about witch-craft, and they have a symbolical character in which they answer to a permanent fact in human life and "represent the mysterious action and reaction between the evil mind and external nature," which invites man to crime because his own heart is depraved. They are not goddesses or fates whom Macbeth is powerless to resist—nor does Macbeth anywhere betray a suspicion that his actions have been forced upon him from without. They represent rather the evil in the hero's own soul. They are to some extent projections of his own heart, but they symbolise also the influences of evil in the world around which are quickened into activity by the evil in the soul and come to reinforce it. They may, thus, be aptly enough described as poetical or mythical impersonations of evil influences. They body forth in living form the fearful echo which the natural world gives back to the evil that speaks out from the human heart. And the secret of their power over Macbeth lies mainly in that they present to him "his embryonic wishes and half-formed thoughts," and stand for forces at work in the world around him which are called into activity by the half-conscious soliciting of his own heart. Their office is not properly to deprave the evil heart. They merely untie the evil hands, and act as mediators between the secret purpose and the final accomplishment of crime. Their effect upon Macbeth is to hasten an action he has already dimly thought of ; their effect upon Banquo is merely to draw from him utterances which display to us the loyal nature and an honest heart.†

In the course of the play it is made clear to us that the idea of attaining the throne by fair means or foul, was not new to Macbeth's mind. He has spoken with his wife about the matter, and when, afterwards, he falters in his purpose, it is no small part of the sting of his wife's reproaches that she can taunt him with his previous plans to secure an object placed at last well within his reach :

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* **Raleigh:** ***Shakespeare.***

† **This is true only when Banquo meets the witches for the first time.**

> " Nor time, nor place
> Did then adhere, and you would make both."

It is not unnatural that Macbeth should have dreamt of the throne. His claim, prior to the elective vote, is as good as Duncan's. He has given more than satisfactory proof of his fitness to govern such an unruly people as the Scots were. He has quelled at a single stroke, as it were, an insurrection within the kingdom and an invasion from without. He was like Duncan a direct descendant of Malcolm II through his daughter. His blood, therefore, was as royal as that of Duncan ; and Duncan was temperamentally unsuited to rule a people that required a masterful, bold, and martial king. Macbeth can very well be excused for feeling that he was better capable of ruling than the gentle but inefficient ruler under whom he served ; who was not warrior enough to fight for his own throne against foreign foes, no statesman enough to discern and deal with enemies near home. Besides, Duncan was getting on in years, and it was but natural for Macbeth sometimes to think of the future when the throne should again be put to the elective vote. Who could then be regarded as fitter for the throne than himself, particularly when he had rendered such signal service to the country and was practically its saviour ? Besides, it was the custom of the North to elect the nearest kinsman of full age, and as such Macbeth's claims were the strongest; because Malcolm and Donalbain were mere youngsters of unripe years. They could in no way be compared to Macbeth. Thus, at any rate, we may conclude that the salutation of the Weird Sisters merely objectifies a suggestion that was no unfamiliar tenant of Macbeth's heart.

This prospect of future greatness he must have frequently discussed with his wife, between whom and himself there has been always a perfect understanding and loving confidence. It is not, also, unnatural that as they both warmed over the future, the possibility of Duncan not doing rightly by Macbeth would sometimes cross his mind or his wife might have suggested such a disappointing possibility. It is very probable that it was at such moments the dark hint of crime would suggest itself to him, with out its taking any definite shape in his mind. Besides, as they anticipated the future grandeur to which they would ascend, their minds were too actively engaged in rearing the aerial castle to let them think in any consequential way of the steps they would take if their hopes were frustrated· Besides, their perfect understanding of each other removed the likelihood of any discussion of plans to be undertaken to realise their hopes should chance prove inadequate Thus though the suggestion of crime was there in the mind of Macbeth his ideas on the matter remained vague and indefinite in the absence of any situation insisting upon him to clarify them. It should also be borne in mind that they were both young—much younger than at the time the play opens, when the average healthy mind always dwells upon the pleasantest aspect of life and is optimistic enough to believe that everything will come all right.

So much by way of preface. We may now follow the course of Macbeth's career in the play. He is introduced to us on the day of his success, returning from the battle-field filled with the exultation of victory and it is in this ardent and enkindled spirit that he is met by the Weird Sisters, and their promises of greatness. Their salutation startles him, throws him into a rapture of meditation. He startles not at the mere prediction that he shall be king, for, though he professes that " to be king stands not within the prospect of belief," the kingship was no more than he might reasonably have expected. The promise that he should be the Thane of Cawdor would have been the more surprising of the two. But it is the sudden flash of revelation thrown upon his own criminal aptitudes that keeps him fixed in thought. The weird salutation has taught him in a moment to know himself better, and the knowledge is disquieting. " Macbeth that shall be king hereafter "—it is his own thought uttered aloud, and the innocent prediction takes the colour of that thought and becomes shrined with the hues of murder. And it is precisely because these supernatural beings embody and objectify the secret evil working in Macbeth that in their appearance is laid the keynote of the whole play. That this is so, becomes apparent as we proceed. The sisters vanish " as breath into the wind " and will not abide his questions. But their disappearance is the signal for the fulfilment of their prophecy to begin. On Macbeth the effect of the news which he hears in part fulfilment of the prophetic salutation is sudden and striking. He accepts at once the truth of the whole prophecy, but it is deeply significant that his mind indulges in no dreams of future grandeur such as might only be natural at such a moment, but hurries at once to a vision of the means where by the prophecy is to be fulfilled. (The road has evidently been traversed before ; and his mind takes the line of least resistance.) The mere prediction need have suggested no sinister thoughts. Duncan was old and the kingship in the ordinary course of nature might be fast approaching. But conspiracy and kingship have been mentally associated in the past, and the proffer of the one inevitably suggests the other. Murder has, however, not been definitely planned. His vaulting ambition might have vaguely suggested the dark hints of crime by which means the crown was to be attained, and opportunity created. Now, therefore, that the image of murder is brought near and floats vividly before the mind, it is horrible to him ; and he yields to it with a sense of horror which throws his whole being into turmoil and confusion :

> "This supernatural soliciting
> Cannot be ill; cannot be good : if ill,
> Why hath it given me earnest of success,
> Commencing in a truth ? I am thane of Cawdor :
> If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
> Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
> And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
> Against the use of nature ? Present fears
> Are less than horrible imaginings :
> My thought whose murder yet is but fantastical,
> Shakes so my single state of man that function
> Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
> But what is not."

He is no hardened villain.* His imagination is, on the other hand, afire with the horrors of hell. He knows that he is capable of the deed, and feels within himself a purpose answering to the suggestion which has so appalled even while attracting him. It is his consciousness that he has nothing to oppose to so powerful a temptation which lends sting to the terrors of thought ; for, in it he reads a dim prophecy of what awaits him and it is the same consciousness which bids him resort to procrastination—the common expedient of shallow and unprincipled minds. He does not altogether dismiss the idea as wicked but shrinks from it as terrible ; he does not resolutely put it from him but merely refuses to look it in the face when a new hope of fulfilment of his desire is engendered by his unexpected elevation to the Thanedom of Cawdor coupled with Ross's announcement that this was but an earnest of greater honour yet to come.

> "If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me
> Without my stir ...."
> "Come what come may,
> Time and the hour runs through the roughest day."

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* Here it is that we see the difference between Richard III and Macbeth. The latter is more like Claudius, Hamlet's uncle, in this regard.

In this frame of mind he meets the King, who greets him with the profoundest expressions of gratitude:

> "More is thy due than more than all can pay."

Such a phrase can carry with it only one interpretation. All that Duncan can give to Macbeth is his due; and the best that Duncan had to give was the succession. Macbeth had shown himself fit for the Kingship by being kingly: his bravery was unimpeachable, his presence carried respect, his address was dignified, his character, so far as it had been known, was unstained. How could Duncan have provided better for the future? Was there anything unconstitutional in the arrangement? Macbeth was of the royal house. Malcolm and Donalbain, the King's sons, were, by their years, unfit to rule. They had taken no part in the fight. The succession of the kinsman of full age was the usual rule in the North.*

Imagine then Macbeth's feeling when, immediately after his superlative promises to his victorious cousin, Duncan nominates Malcolm the Prince of Cumberland and heir-apparent to the throne. The reaction is intense, and immediately lets in, only with far more definiteness of conception, the visions of murder, which have already visited his brain. They have now a fresh stimulus in a sudden and unlooked-for reaction of disappointment, and much of their terror for Macbeth is, thus, for the moment dissipated, while the prospect of having Duncan within the walls of his own castle gives them a new definiteness of form:

> "The Prince of Cumberland! that is a step,
> On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
> For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;
> Let not light see my dark and deep desires:
> The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be,
> Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see."

There is a pathos in the position of unconscious Duncan, which were it not pathos, might also be scoffing irony. How unconsciously he paves the way to his own destruction! Macbeth wanted but little to spur his excited indecision to action, and that little Duncan is not slow to supply. The deed would never, perhaps, have been one of stupendous difficulty, but Duncan must make it as easy as possible. What a pregnant commentary alike on his virtues and his weakness!

Meanwhile, apparently before Malcolm's appointment, Macbeth has written to his wife of the strange apparition of the Weird

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* **Ransome's** ***Short Studies of Shakespeare's Plots.***

Sisters, and we are now in a position to obtain a view of Macbeth through the eyes of the person who knows him best. Some such commentary we feel to be necessary at this stage of the story. Much that has gone before has been puzzling. Why did Macbeth catch so strongly at the weird prophecy only to dismiss the idea of crime with such relief immediately afterwards ? And why was he so ready to revive again when the way to the natural succession was barred to him ? Lady Macbeth seems already to know much of the mental process through which her husband has passed.

> " Glamis thou art, and Cawdor ; and shalt be
> What thou art promised : yet do I fear thy nature ;
> It is too full o'the milk of human kindness
> To catch the nearest way : thou wouldst be great ;
> Art not without ambition, but without
> The illness should attend it : what thou wouldst highly
> Thou wouldst holily ; wouldst not play false,
> And yet wouldst wrongly win : thou'ldst have, great Glamis,
> That which cries " Thus must thou do if thou have it ";
> And that which rather thou dost fear to do
> Than wishest should be undone."

Macbeth is, in the view of his wife, ' too full of the milk of human kindness ' ; too full, that is, of the ordinary weakness of human nature, too apt to shrink from what is not natural, too thoroughly human to catch ' the nearest way.' He would be great but is not sufficiently unscrupulous to be a villain of the resolute, unshrinking kind. He cherished unholy aims and wrong desires of gain, but shrinks from unholy means, from playing false. He kept from crimes, as she thinks, not because it was in itself abhorrent to his nature, not because it was infinitely repugnant to his conscience, but from a vague fear of the results of evil-doing associated to a great extent with thoughts of failure and disgrace. Perhaps, too, because he would still preserve for himself some show of self-respect. And what an echo do we find in Lady Macbeth's words of the thought which her husband has already uttered :

> " Yet let that be
> Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see."

Much that has puzzled us heretofore is now made clear. But we tremble to think of the awful possibilities of crime latent in the character such as Lady Macbeth has drawn. There is in it no principles which make for good and are against evil. Lady Macbeth, on the other hand, is not imaginative. Like most of Shakespeare's women she is quick-witted and practical; and her lack of imagination is at once her strength and her weakness. It strengthens her for immediate action but it is fatal to her in the end and to her husband, too. Had she understood him she could never have spurred him on. Had she imagined the full cruelty of her deed, she could never have done it. With this light thrown upon Macbeth we can not only understand what has gone before, but can already foresee much of what is to follow.

But we are also in a position to know that Lady Macbeth's account, true as it must be so far as it goes, does not cover the whole ground of her husband's nature. Built as she was in a different and almost antithetical mould, she could not appreciate the immense force of her husband's imagination, morbidly set alight, as it was, by a conscience which still wielded a scourge. Macbeth's vivid powers of imagination form a very important part of his character. We have seen already how it is through them that his conscience works when its direct voice fails to touch his will, and is driven almost to refuse its office. And we already guess that through them his earthly punishment will begin; nay, has begun already, though the crime is not yet translated into action. For his terrors before the deed, those horrible imaginings which made his seated heart beat against his ribs, are no less a substitute for the remorse he will not feel than the picture of the horrors which will haunt him when the deed is done. Macbeth's scourge will not be remorse, but he will create round himself an atmosphere of imagined horrors which will cling to him without ceasing. It was some consciousness of this which made him shrink from catching the nearest way. And though under the stimulus of a bitter disappointment, he partly overcomes his fears, we know, as we watch him, that they are not dead but merely dormant. But to revert once more to Lady Macbeth, her husband's letter has carried her beyond "the ignorant present" and she feels "the future in the instant." Just at this moment of tense excitement comes a messenger with the unexpected news that the King is coming to the castle of Macbeth that very night. The news is so sudden, so unlooked for, that Lady Macbeth almost staggers and is appalled by its suddenness. "Thou art mad to say it: Is not thy master with him?" is the unsuitable reply with which she confronts the man who brings the tidings; but in an instant she recovers herself sufficiently to be able to falter out—"who, were't so, would have inform'd for preparation," lest the grim and hideous suggestion implied in her startled reply becomes palpable to the man. When the messenger is gone and her mind comes back once more to gloat over the possibilities of this unexpected development, when the murder is something more than a mere prospect in a yet uncertain future, and when her resolution is taken, the appalling suddenness of the situation and the fierceness of her resolve raises her to an ecstasy of horror which is almost sublime, though so evil ; because of the spirit of total self-forgetfulness.

> " Come, you spirits
> That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
> And fill me, from crown to the toe, top-full
> Of direst cruelty ...."
> "Come to my woman's breasts,
> And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
> Wherever in your sightless substances
> You wait on nature's mischief ! Come, thick night,
> And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
> That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
> Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
> To cry ' Hold, hold.' "

At this moment her husband enters and the quick colloquy which ensues tells Macbeth that she has already decided on the course which has suggested itself to him. Rapidly she sketches for Macbeth the part he must play. His work it will be to lull Duncan to security—no difficult task we should imagine. She herself, she says, will strike the fatal blow :

> "Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
> May read strange matters : to beguile the time,
> Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
> Your hand, your tongue : look like the innocent flower,
> But be the serpent under't. He that's coming
> Must be provided for : and you shall put
> This night's great business into my dispatch.............."
> "Only look up clear :
> To alter favour ever is to fear :
> Leave all the rest to me."

Brought face to face with the necessity of immediate decision Macbeth wavers once more. Once more he would procrastinate, " we will speak further ! " But the former horror at the revelation of his own criminal aptitudes does not revive. Familiarity indeed breeds indifference and he yields to a pressure which he does not wish to resist.

Macbeth is progressing in wickedness. His mind has lived a life-time in the last few hours, and he is now " experiencing that inexorable law of human souls that we prepare ourselves for sudden deeds by reiterated choice of good or evil which gradually determines character."* Rapid as his progress seems, in reality it has been gradually determined ; his whole life has been a preparation for this moment. How far he is progressing we shall be able to appreciate when we see him self-displayed and exhibiting the innermost workings of his mind in the famous soliloquy :

> "If it were done when 'tis done, 'twere well
> It were done quickly."

All horror at the deed itself is gone and we find him calmly summing up the objections which, to his mind, urge themselves against the deed he meditates, and lamenting that he has not sufficient motive to afford the smallest justification of what he knows will be universally damned as crime of the deepest dye. It has been said that there is in this soliloquy no trace of any thought of sin ; no trace of any horror at the enormity of the crime he contemplates ; no trace, even of the lowest moral incentives, hope of heaven or fear of hell. It amounts to this, says Dr. Moulton,† "that murder is a game at which two can play, that heartlessness has the effect of drawing general attention, that ambition is apt to defeat its own object."

But such a view must, it seems to me, be qualified to be made tenable. Macbeth could not describe the horror of the deed as it would appear to others, were there no horror in his own heart. He talks of consequences, because he is trying to get away from the power of that imagination which shakes him in its grasp. He is striving with all his might to break its power and is forcing himself to look at the matter from a practical point of view. And he is so far successful that though he cannot stifle his imagination he changes its centre. The awful image which a few days ago made his seated heart beat at the ribs, has given place to that of pity striding the blast. It is not the horror of the deed but the horror of its consequences which now holds him. He is not in any ordinary sense afraid of these consequences but he shrinks from the picture he has drawn of an execrated name and a horror-stricken world. On the appearance of his wife he tells her that he will proceed no further in the business. It is however very characteristic and significant that he does not tell her his true reasons.

He is afraid of seeming a coward if he says that he desists through fear of consequences and he cannot explain to his wife the imaginative horror he has memories of. He is driven therefore to a certain lameness of speech :

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* George Eliot : *Romola.*

† Moulton's *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist.*

> " We will proceed no further in this business :
> He hath honour'd me of late and I have bought
> Golden opinions form all sorts of people,
> Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
> Not cast aside so soon."

This is not altogether pretence. It puts forward a feeling which, doubtless, he knew he ought to feel, and he would fain delude himself into the belief that this is really his motive and deceive himself, as men only too easily may do, into regarding himself still with some degree of complacence. But with ready instinct his wife sees through the pretence, hits him hard on his weakest point :

> " Art thou afraid
> To be the same in thine own act and valour
> As thou art in desire ? "

Just as in the time of her disease she speaks the same words with the unconscious lips of the sleep-walker, " Fie, My Lord, fie ; a soldier and afeard ? " To be scorned as a coward by the woman he loves is more than Macbeth can bear, or for the matter of that any man. In a burst of irritation he bids her hold her peace :

> " I dare do all that may become a man ;
> Who dares do more is none."

But an indignation, which arises with suspicious tardiness only at the moment when the consequences of sin are urging their argument, is too conscious of its own hollowness to stand resolutely against an attack which takes its hollowness for granted. Ignoring the exalted morality of Macbeth's last utterance, Lady Macbeth hits him again where she knows he most flinches from a blow, and in answer to his wife's passionate address he can only falter out : " If we should fail ? " But the business is already settled. Conscience, as we have seen, had no real part in this debate, and insistent realism of Lady Macbeth's remonstrances has overcome imagined fears which were the real ground of Macbeth's reluctance. Macbeth catches some of his wife's fire, and moves on to the deed not only with determination but also with some zeal.

> " I am settled, and bend up
> Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
> Away, and mock the time with fairest show :
> False face must hide what the false heart doth know."

This closes, what we may call, the third chapter of Macbeth's crime. The first chapter which brings us to the opening of the drama, was at a time when, unstained as yet by actual crime, Macbeth had dallied nevertheless with the thought of crime as a means to ends which he greatly desired. It was a time of wrong desires and ambitions, working slowly but surely their inevitable result upon the character. The second chapter shows us Macbeth horrified at the awful shape in which his own thoughts stand revealed as they come back upon him from without like a fearful echo, and for the first time show themselves to him stripped of the gloss in which he had wrapped them even from his own gaze. In the third, we find him striving to grow callous to the awfulness of the form at first so dreadful. The horror of the deed is mitigated as its face grows familiar, and its place is taken by a statesman-like summing up of consequences and a picture of the public horror which they include ; the process resulting in a feeling of repulsion too weak to abide the touch of passion and the breath of scorn.

There remain but two brief chapters to complete the history —the consummation of the deed, and the results it generates.

Now that the practical details have been supplied him, now that the nameless vision of murder assumes, finally, a concrete and a definite shape, Macbeth moves forward to the murder even with animation. He is not fearful but excited : his imagination is wrought up to its highest pitch, and is so fired by the lonely horror amid which he moves, that he can even have an eye to the dramatic environments of the deed :

> "Now o'ver the one half-world
> Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
> The curtain'd sleep ; withcraft celebrate
> Pale Hecate's offerings; and wither'd murder
> Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
> Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
> With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
> Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,
> Thy very stones prate of my wherabout,
> Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
> And take the present horror from the time,
> Which now suits with it."

What an awful curse is latent in an imagination which can work thus ! But for the time it stands its victim's friend, and nerves him for a task whose horror is hidden only in the moment of execution. Even Lady Macbeth is not equal to the strain, and when she gives way to an irresistible instinct of feminine delicacy, Macbeth rises to the occasion and the deed is done. But from this moment his punishment begins too. He becomes, till he can feel no longer, a prey to those supernatural imaginings whereby his conscience wields its scourge—though but now these had stood his helper. He is utterly unnerved, and as he views his hands red with blood he has a foretaste of what is to be his punishment :

> "How is't with me, every noise appals me ?
> What hands are here ? ha ! they pluck out mine eyes !
> Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
> Clean from my hand ? No ; this hand will rather
> The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
> Making the green one red."

In the events which follow Macbeth is attended by the greatest possible good luck. The murder is discovered in the most natural way, and even the blunder of slaying the grooms is lost sight of in the sensation which follows discovery of the flight of the King's sons. Lady Macbeth had fainted—perhaps she really did faint just at the right moment, and had tided her husband over what may have been an ugly pause. And thus the close of the second Act of the drama leaves Macbeth in apparently secure possession of all he sinned to get.

It will not be necessary to follow the course of his future with the same detail as hitherto. What concerns us is the mental history, and that can be soon told.

The horrible imaginings which might have betokened at first, if Macbeth could but have understood himself aright, a prophetic warning of what was to come, have returned upon him in a new character :

> " We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it ;
> She'll close and be herself, whilst our poor malice
> Remains in danger of her former tooth.
> But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer,
> Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
> In the affliction of these terrible dreams
> That shake us nightly : better be with the dead,
> Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
> Than on the torture of the mind to lie
> In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave;
> After life's fitful fever he sleeps well ;
> Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,
> Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothnig,
> Can touch him further."

His mind is full of scorpions, but it is a terrible irony that while crime has put them there, Macbeth can think of no way to get rid of them but by a further course of crime.

> "Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill."

It is as if an outraged conscience can inflict no greater punishment than to goad the sinner on to fresh sins :

> "That with reiterated crimes he might
> Heap on himself damnation."

With Milton's Satan, Macbeth would say :

> "For only in destroying I find ease
> To my relentless thoughts."

Not only does Macbeth press on to fresh crimes, but he grows more self-reliant in executing them. His wife gradually passes out of his life. Her nerves have snapped beneath the strain. Her part is played out. But her husband's career continues. He has deeper depths of moral evil and despair to sound before he follows her to the grave. The whole flood of evil in his nature is now let loose. He becomes an open tyrant, dreaded by every one about him, and a terror to his country.

> "Each new morn
> New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows
> Strike heaven on the face."

She is not the mother of her children, but their grave :

> "Where nothing
> But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile ;
> Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air
> Are made, not marked."

For this wild rage and furious cruelty we are prepared : but vices of another kind start up as he plunges on his downward way.

> "I grant him bloody,
> Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
> Sudden, malicious,"

Says Malcolm : and two of these epithets surprise us. Who would have expected avarice or lechery in Macbeth ? His ruin seems complete.*

It is at any rate a testimony to an ancient and perhaps not wholly extinguished sense for goodness that Macbeth does not, like Iago, glory in his evil ; it is perhaps a redeeming feature that he is only infinitely weary and not relentlessly wicked when he looks forward. But in no case can paralysis be called a form of life. Fresh crimes do but make him less sensible of crime, and he attains at last an incapacity for feeling which is his final punishment on earth.

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* Bradley, p. 363.

> "I have almost forgot the taste of fears:
> The time has been, and my senses would have cool'd
> To hear a night-shriek; and my fell of hair
> Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir
> As life were in't: I have supp'd full with horrors;
> Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
> Cannot once start me."

Even his wife's death cannot stir this stagnancy. There has indeed been a progress of the soul on the path of death. The man who at Duncan's death shuddered because he could not say "Amen" now holds the sombre creed of the fatalist.

> "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
> To the last syllable of recorded time;
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
> Life's but a waking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more: it is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing."

Macbeth's candle is almost burnt out. He is all but dead now. One more flicker of animation, one more burst of flame, as old courage returns with despair, and the tyrant falls beneath the sword of Justice, while his funeral oration writes him down a "dead butcher" with a "fiend-like queen."

Before he entered upon a career of crime there was much that was attractive and noble in Macbeth. Physically he was a fine man. His courage was dauntless. As a warrior he was renowned. He had fine gifts of intellect and sensibility, a powerful imagination, a capacity for thought, and, better than these, a capacity for love and tenderness which is clearly shown us, even in his evil day, by the undoubtedly sincere affection he bears his wife. He would seem to have had also the soldier's regard for honour and truth, and dislike for chicanery and fraud. Deceit and dissimulation did not come natural to him, and he needs to be schooled by his wife to look like the innocent flower while being really the serpent under it.

Moreover, Macbeth seems to show some indications of moral education. His moral perceptions were by no means blunt and must have once done their work. Some of his utterances are really fine and profoundly true, and though they evidently do not come from the depths of an earnest heart, he at any rate makes as though they do ; they are not cynically uttered or spoken out of deliberate and smiling hypocrisy. He would like to believe that he meant them.

In reality, however, Macbeth's character was never truly noble. He is not, as some critics would have us think, a noble nature degraded by the coarser but stronger nature of his wife. But neither, as others think, is he meant to be a cold, cautious, "resolute, remorseless villain, restrained from crime only by mean and cowardly apprehension." He was a man blest with many natural gifts from which a noble character might have been produced. But he utterly lacked the basis or principle by which alone nobility can be attained. This is no natural gift. It is the fruit of self-discipline and honourable purposes sustained through stress of trial. And he who fails to plant his feet upon this basis stands upon a thin crust beneath which are working forces that may one day burst through and overwhelm him. The tyranny of accumulated impulses is so grinding that they seem to owe their power to forces greater than man and to rise by virtue of that force beyond human control. It is for this reason Shakespeare has given them an independent life and often embodies them in the supernatural beings who are exhibited on his stage. "His witches and ghosts and fairies do not come uncalled : they are the shadows and reflections of human minds, creatures of the mirror, who, by a startling and true psychology are brought alive, released from the true dominion of Man's will, and established as his masters."* Macbeth excited by the dark hints of ambition, falls in with the witches and thereafter is carried with fearful speed into an abyss of crime. Hamlet saddened by the death of his father, and tortured by the infidelity of his mother, receives the message of the ghost, which brings his suspicions and broodings to a point, and makes him thenceforward an instrument in the hands of destiny. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the inexplicable whims and changes of inconsistent love seems to be the work of fairies, sporting, not malevolently, with human weakness. In each case we see very different phases of life, and with gradations from fancy to sadness, from sadness to terror, the almost ultra-human power which gathers round impulses and passions that have stirred within the human breast. Once this power is let loose upon man he seems to be but the plaything of destiny, but its forces have been gathering slowly within before they burst upon him from without.

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* **Raleigh, p. 159.**

Thus though the character of Macbeth is individual, its significance is universal, and the story of his life is played around us every day on many a stage of life with every variety of accessory circumstance.

The growing mastery of wrong impulses, wrong in many degrees of a descending scale when unchecked by fixed and settled principles results in just such a process, however it may disguise itself, as Macbeth undergoes.*

There is the gradual drifting away from a hold on the great truths of life, into a commonplace and traditional morality which rises readily to the lips but has no power on the heart. There may be, just at the beginning, the same quick growth of moral sentiment in the shallow soil, followed as quickly by the rapid withering away of the plant which has no root. This is the first stage of deterioration, and as yet its terrible potentialities are not revealed. For with all this there may yet exist a vague fear of wrong ; the conscience may still act as a deterrent, and pronounced crime may still seem horrible and repulsive.

But there comes a time, and surely it will not tarry, when in a moment all the laxity and thinness and growing falsity of the man's life gather themselves together into one startling temptation : and though perhaps the relics of an once innocent past still urge revolt, the end is certain. For each single motive which might have placed the man upon his feet, firm and unflinching though all the winds of evil blow upon him, has been successively strangled by the successive, perhaps, imperceptible lapses of the unprincipled and unspiritual life in the past. His life has created for him a tradition which acts with all the greater force because its powers have been slowly accumulating. And so, though the temptation passes as a lightning flash, and the struggle lasts but an hour, it has been prepared of old, and it has been determined in days that are past that the issue shall be evil.

Beyond this there lies, as all students of the human heart have known, a state, the most awful that can be conceived. A period when God leaves, as it were, the soul that He has made, and when His hand presses no more upon the sinner. A time of utter callousness of heart, a time when terrors of sin depart, when the heart knows not any more the fears which once it obeyed. Terrible indeed is such a state, for, for it, there seems no way back to repentance and restoration,—terrible because it presents to us an image of Death in the midst of life itself.

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* Godfrey Cass in George Eliot's *Silas Marner*, and Tito in *Romola* are both, in varying degrees, instances in point.

Such seems to me to be the criticism which Shakespeare offers in this wonderful tragedy. And it should be observed that with consummate skill he succeeds in retaining for Macbeth at the end some measure of our sympathy. We do not hate Macbeth as we do Iago or Richard III. It may be because he suffers terribly before our eyes, unlike Iago who suffers not at all, or Richard who suffers only when his will is laid at rest in sleep. But it is also because we feel that the distance between ourselves and Macbeth is not infinite—that he is far more normal than the two villains with whom we have compared him. Macbeth, we feel, might have been a good man had he not been 'possessed.' It is a term we use, happily not often, to describe the unaccountable delinquencies of men we have known as friends, and it may be even of ourselves. Shakespeare has in this play analysed for us the process of possession, he has shown us its small beginnings in the secret recesses of the heart, and traced its development into a power which defies human mastery. He has shown it to be the tyranny of accumulated impulse unchecked by fixity of principle.

In reading the play, thus, we can hope that we have followed the author's mind and caught at least one glint of actual colour from a fabric spun by the poet himself.

15. SATYENDRA NATH RAY

[The Department of English in the University of Dacca is truly a bee-hive of energetic literary activity—so reached the ears of the present writer a metaphor-wreathed report ! And he had no reason to disbelieve it after knowing the valuable work of Dr. Ray, the Head of the Department, and that of his distinguished colleagues like Dr. P. K. Guha, Dr. S. Ganguli and Prof. A. Bose—to all of whom he is an unfailing source of inspiration. Born in May 1892, Dr. Ray received his education from the Universities of Calcutta and London. It was at the latter place that he secured the Ph. D. degree for his exhaustive and scholarly dissertation on " Anglo-Indian Poetry " (1929). But Dr. Ray's literary interests do not all centre round this subject. His frequent visits to England—(1924-26, 1929, 1938-39)—and his work in the British Museum, the Cambridge University Library, the Oxford University Library, the Fitzwilliam Museum, and the Bodleian—have given him genuine inspiration and ample facilities to work on some important problems of English literature. His critical contributions relating to the work of Rossetti and Browning have been published in *Notes and Queries* and *Modern Language Notes*, and have been recognised as throwing new light on important but obscure aspects of study.

Starting his teaching career at the Serampore College in 1920, Dr. Ray went over to the University of Dacca in 1926. Appointed Reader at the same place in 1929, he was honoured as the Head of the Department in 1942—a distinction which he richly deserves by virtue of his substantial worth. An irrepressible literary enthusiast, he is ever working on some problem or other, and ever inspiring others also to work. The wielder of a happy style, he infuses into his writings a zest and vigour that are remarkable. In the essay included here he deals with an aspect of absorbing interest—relating to the poetry of the doyen of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and refutes the insinuation in the phrase " chamber-poet " as applied to him.]

NATURAL IMAGERY IN ROSSETTI'S POETRY

Tabulated carefully, the images drawn from nature in Rossetti's poetry provide an interesting study and correct many a current misconception. The main conclusions which are suggested by such a compilation are given below. A full analysis of Rosetti's natural imagery is scarcely called for in a polemical essay, the main contention of which is otherwise substantiated.

Of imagery relating to the day and the night, Rossetti is generally regarded as caring more for the latter. This is true in the sense that night imagery seems to harmonize more with his dominant moods. But it would be wrong to think that he was not alive to the glories of the day. If frequency of reference is made the sole test, day imagery will be found to be more numerous than those derived from the night. Curiously again, fond as Rossetti was of subdued light, loving to see even the moon muffled, he had a distinct love for the high noon. While his phrases describing the night, such as, 'night's unfeatured shape,' its 'inveteracy,' the 'blue lapse' of its hours, 'the manifold circumfluence of night's flood-tide' are strikingly fresh; his descriptions of the noontide, are no less impressive or original. 'A Last Confession' and 'Ave' have their scenes laid in the warmer latitudes, and have extraordinarily vivid pictures of the noon-day and its attendant sultry stillness and glare. One whole sonnet: 'Silent Noon' has for its setting 'the sun-searched growths' and the visible silence of the noontide. The pictures of the poet 'triumphing with the sun,' 'glorying in sun 's mid-height,' lying outstretched upon the shore in the sun's warmth, bear the impress of actual experience. In night imagery, an image which haunts him persistently is that of the moon in its 'cloud nest'. The full moon figures rarely, but is described with the joy of having seen and wondered. Rossetti is also alive to the beauty of the stars: to their collective glory when they bring 'wonder new-born,' as also to the witchery of the lone star riding near the moon, emulous. The tender beauty of the dawn is described again and again in soft and colourful phrases, while the mellow beauty of the sunset and the evening affords scope for pictorial description as well as food for melancholy musings. The sunset with skies 'unsealing like lands never known,' its 'desolate disarray,' and 'the slow-subsiding of the turbid light' are images which linger in the memory.

Rosetti, Bloomsbury-bred though he was, was aware of the processes of the seasons, though not in the same way as Morris. We wrote separate sonnets on Winter and Spring at Kelmscott, in which the seasonal landscape with animal and bird life is pictured with precision. 'Silent Noon,' written at about the same time, is full of summer feeling, 'Autumn Idleness' is steeped in languor and mellow light. His interpretation of Botticelli's 'Spring' and Giorgione's 'Venetian Pastoral' bespeak insight into the life of the seasons. As to scattered imagery, contrary to the common expectation, Winter and Autumn contribute much less than Spring and Summer. Spring imagery, particularly, is abundant. Sometimes spring is 'sick', and its 'foot falters on the debatable borders of the year.' At other times it is 'gracile', wakes to bewildering sounds, and cuckoo-throb its heat beat. While the poet's response to spring is not always cheerful, his response to summer is invariably warm. 'The marshalled marvels on the skirts of May,' the day 'sun-coloured to the imperishable core,' 'the fresh hourly wonder o'er the summer land of light and cloud,' the summer eve glowing with the glory of all things possessed, are expressions fresh-minted from the poet's spirit revelling in the season.

Rossetti seems to have been less alive to the voice of the wind than to its visible effect on the grass and trees and water. While 'moan' and 'wail' are about the only words employed to describe its voice, its visible effects provide a rich harvest of images. Again, Rossetti, the indoor poet of the popular imagination, revels in storm scenery. 'The great gales bearing in tattered clamps of waif weed and 'flinging the sea mews clamouring in the grass'; 'the wind that has long swept the world' and 'beats out its breath in the last torn tree'; 'the great wind sweeping the skies'; torn tree'; 'the great wind sweeping the skies'; 'the bitter harsh 'the bitter harsh withering sea wind';—are described in passages of unsurpassed vigour, while he seems to care hardly at all for 'sweet airs blown along the grass.'

Cloud and rain come into Rossetti's poetry again and again. His fondness for the clouded moon has already been mentioned. Clouds 'scattering and amassing in the billowing skies'; 'cloud stooping low and the surf rising high'; 'the long cloud, the long wood's counterpart, shedding darkness above the labouring hill'; 'summer clouds that visit every wing with fires of sunrise and sen-setting'; and sunset clouds, which, 'like a new height, seem piled to climb';—appeal to his painter's eye. 'The lips of cloud refusing to part', the dimness of the cloud, and 'lights, and clouds and wings gone by', provide the setting for some of his sad moods. In one passage describing a 'little fold of separate sky with its pasturing cloud', Rossetti almost echoes Wordsworth. Rain comes in for brief references as also for detailed pictures. 'The sound of abundant rain' is strikingly fresh, while 'empty pastures blind with rain' recalls Tennyson. Rain has pure image-value in passages like

> 'As after a long day's bitter rain
> At dusk, when the flower cups shrink.
> The drops run in from the beaded brink,
> And all the close shut petals drink.'

'Close to his feet the sky did shake
With wind in pools that the rains make,
The ripple set his eye to ache.'

The integration of rain-imagery with human psychology is illustrated again and again, in ' The Portrait ', in the lyrics, and most powerfully perhaps in the sonnet ' A Dark Day ' where the rain drops striking the traveller's brow, portending coming rain or the relic of a storm which is over, symbolise coming or past suffering.

Trees and forests, creepers and grass, flowers and fruit are freely woven into the texture of Rossetti's poetry. Trees standing like wands against the fervid sky, trees storm-felled and moss-grown, ' whose roots are hillocks where the children play ', the tree with the bent head ' seeing in the stream its own fecundity,' are drawn direct from nature, while the immemorial associations of trees and forests are touched upon in the reference to 'ancestral oaks ', which having known the fathers will yet forget the children, as in that to future growth of the young fir trees into a wood when they will hide the sunset and their shade will be laid on the elder sand. ' The hyacinth light of the forest shadows ', the branches ' across the lovers ' eyes, which catch the skies in a net,' ' the groundwhirl of the perished leaves of hope ' are unforgettable images culled from direct observation.

Wild flowers figure much more than garden flowers in Rossetti's poetry, again perhaps contrary to expectation. He refers to ' twining hedge-flowers,' ' golden king-cup fields with silver edge, where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn hedge,' the iris with its gold-crowned sheaf, the flowering rush, ' the sceptred arrow-leaf,' ' the heart-shaped seal of green flecking the snowdrops ' underneath the snow, ' honey suckles springing by scores —all virgin lamps of scent and dew.' ' the woodspurge—three cups in one '—, ' the last cowslip in the fields,' ' the first corn poppy,' ' tearspurge and blood-wort burning red '; and in calling the new-born wood-flowers ' bashful eyed,' forswears his resolve to avoid plagiarism. Roses and lilies are almost the only garden flowers which contribute to Rossetti's poetry.

Water imagery is universally present in Rossetti's poetry of all periods. Still waters and running, wan waters and bright, serve for description and correlation with the poet's moods. Still waters are illustrated best by ' waters stilled at even, ' ' the woodside well ' mirroring the eyes of the lovers, calm waters ' filled with the sky,' ' the pool masked with green ' with its black naked depth, ' the dim shoal and the weary water of the place of sighs,'

—to quote images which will occur most readily to the reader. Similarly, running water is represented by 'floodtides seeking the sea,' 'soft waters warbling to the moon,' 'foam-bewildered springs,' 'the furtive flickering streams returning to light,' 'fountains veiling the changing skies,' 'the winding river reaches,' 'the river brimmed with rain,' 'flecked with foam,' and flowing through 'close met' and parted banks. 'The Stream's Secret' and some of the poems written at Kelmscott are replete with river imagery.

Mrs. Esther Wood's observation that the love of the sea was a late growth in Rossetti's poetic development is only partially true in the sense that the pictures of the sea are rather better drawn in his later poems. It was perhaps as much because he lived at Bognor, as because his restlessness of spirit of these after days found something akin in the sea in storm and calm, that sea-imagery is so frequent in his later poems. But the sea is present in his earlier poems also. The infinite stretch of the sea has a special fascination for the poet. We shall have occasion to see presently that this is bound up with his innate love for large horizons. Passages like 'farther off than the last line of the sea,' 'the cloud-foaming firmamental blue rests on the blue line of a foamless sea,' 'the very sky and sea-line of her soul,' blend the vastness of the sea with the infinity of the heavens. Continually again the sea is sympathetic or antipathetic to human destiny. The most memorable passages of this kind are perhaps the following :

> Is it the sky's vault or the ocean's sound ?
> Nay, is it Life or Death, thus thunder-crowned,
> That mid the tide of all emergency
> Now notes my separate wave, and to what sea
> Its difficult eddies labour to the ground ?

And

> So shall the tongues of sea's foam
> Bewail one hour the more, when sea
> And wind are one with memory.

Sea produce, seasonably diverse, like sea flowers, sea shell, the wild waifs cast up by the sea, sea weed, are also mentioned here and there.

References to bird and animal life are not very numerous in Rossetti's poetry. In view of his interest in animals and purchases at Jamrach's for the Chelsea house, it is curious that there is but one detailed picture of an animal in his poetry :

> From hillock eaves
> The deer gaze calling, dappled white and dun,
> As if, being foresters of old, the sun
> Had marked them with the shades of forest trees.

In one of his Kelmscott poems he records in detail a habit of starlings. He also refers to particular birds, the lark, the nightingale, the cuckoo, the dove, the rook, but hardly with any freshness of observation, association or epithet, the references to the rook being slightly more concrete than those to the rest. A bird is often a symbol of mystery to him. It is generally just a bird and nothing more. In this, Rossetti's poems show a remarkable affinity with his pitcures, where mystic or non-descript birds generally serve the painter's purpose. Sometimes it is hidden, casting its note in the inmost heart of the grove; at other times it flies low between the water and the willow leaves, leaving them aquiver ; sometimes, steeped in fire, the homeward pinions sway above the dovecotes. In many of the passages a genuine pity for their helplessness and frailty associates them with his sad moods. Once as the beloved turned her neck at the swallow's soar, the intimation of immortality came to the poet.

As has been observed in connection with the sea, Rossetti was fond of large and vague vistas and unrestricted spaciousness. 'Deep under deep unknown' and height above unknown height, the last line of the sea, the shadows and shoals that edge eternity, thought drowning further than the furthest flood-brink, the whole sky standing grey and not known,—such being the setting of many of his poems, and such the allurements to which his imagination constantly yields, the picture of the chamber--poet, straining only after perfection of execution, is a myth which cannot bear even a moment's scrutiny.

16. RABINDRANATH TAGORE

[The star that shone so bright in our country's literary firmament shedding its rare effulgence on our culture and civilization—is now no more. But what though ? Its splendour abides with us still—and shall long abide as a light unto the vanishing ages, as a sentinel on the outposts of human consciousness ! What brief note can sum up adequately the essence of Rabindranath Tagore's (1861-1941) genius or do justice to his wonderful many-sided achievement ? Poet, play-wright, actor, story-writer, novelist, critic, essayist, letter-writer, journalist, educationist, painter, musician, patriot, mystic, philosopher—Tagore had an amazing profusion of gifts. In all these varied branches of literary, artistic, aesthetic and cultural activity—his achievement has something of heavenly wonder in it. Like a great gardener he sowed many different seeds on the soil of life and reaped a rich harvest of blossoming flowers !

Though essentially a song-bird who thrilled the heart of humanity with lyric melodies, Tagore has enriched other branches of literature also. In aesthetic and literary criticism especially—his contribution is in the nature of a landmark. With an unerring poet's eye he has revealed the beauties and subtleties of not only ancient Sanskrit literature but also of artistic ideas and aesthetic conceptions. His critique on *Shakuntala* ranks among the world's best critical interpretations—an illuminating revelation of rainbow radiance ! The essay included here was directly written in English by the poet himself and was originally published in *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London), edited by Sir S. Radhakrishnan and Prof. J. H. Muirhead. Drawing the material from his own rich life and experience, Tagore scans himself, the intellectual, emotional, artistic, aesthetic and spiritual elements in him, and extends the scrutiny to poets and poetry in general. Valuable as a personal creed, the essay is invaluable on account of its general applicability to any artist of intrinsic worth.]

THE RELIGION OF AN ARTIST

I was born in 1861, that is not an important date of history, but it belongs to a great epoch in Bengal, when the currents of three movements had met in the life of our country. One of these, the religious, was introduced by a very great-hearted man of gigantic intelligence, Raja Rammohan Roy. It was revolutionary, for he tried to reopen the channel of spiritual life which had been obstructed for many years by the sands and debris of creeds that were formal and materialistic, fixed in external practices lacking spiritual significance. People who cling to an ancient past have their pride in the antiquity of their accumulations, in the sublimity of time-honoured walls around them. They grow nervous and angry when some great spirit, some lover of truth, breaks open their enclosure and floods it with the sunshine of thought and the breath of life. Ideas cause movement and all forward movements they consider to be a menace to their warehouse security.

This was happening about the time I was born. I am proud to say that my father was one of the great leaders of that movement, a movement for whose sake he suffered ostracism and braved social indignities. I was born in this atmosphere of the advent of new ideals, which at the same time were old, older than all the things of which that age was proud.

There was a second movement equally important. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, who, though much older than myself, was my contemporary and lived long enough for me to see him, was the first pioneer in the literary revolution, which happened in Bengal about that time. Before his arrival our literature had been oppressed by a rigid rhetoric that choked its life and loaded it with ornaments that became its fetters. Bankim Chandra was brave enough to go against the orthodoxy which believed in the security of tombstones and in that finality which can only belong to the lifeless. He lifted the dead weight of ponderous forms from our language and with a touch of his magic wand aroused our literature from her age-long sleep. A great promise and a vision of beauty she revealed to us when she awoke in the fulness of her strength and grace.

There was yet another movement started about this time called the National. It was not fully political, but it began to give voice to the mind of our people trying to assert their own personality. It was a voice of impatience at the humiliation constantly heaped upon us by people who were not oriental, and who had, especially at that time, the habit of sharply dividing the human world into the good and the bad according to the hemispheres to which they belong.

This contemptuous spirit of separatedness was perpetually hurting us and causing great damage to our own world of culture. It generated in our young men a distrust of all things that had come to them as an inheritance from their past. The old Indian pictures and other works of art were laughed at by our students in imitation of the laughter of their European schoolmasters of that age of philistinism.

Though later on our teachers themselves had changed their mind, their disciples had hardly yet fully regained confidence in the merit of our art. They have had a long period of encouragement in developing an appetite for third-rate copies of French pictures, for gaudy oleographs abjectly cheap, for the pictures that are products of mechanical accuracy of a stereotyped standard, and they still considered it to be a symptom of superior culture to be able disdainfully to refuse oriental works of creation.

The modern young men of that period nodded their heads and said that true originality lay not in the discovery of the rhythm of the essential in the heart of reality but in the full lips, tinted cheeks and bare breasts of imported pictures. The same spirit of rejection, born of utter ignorance, was cultivated in other departments of our culture. It was the result of the hypnotism exercised upon the minds of the younger generation by people who were loud of voice and strong of arm. The national movement was started to proclaim that we must not be indiscriminate in our rejection of the past. This was not a reactionary movement but a revolutionary one, because it set out with a great courage to deny and to oppose all pride in mere borrowings.

These three movements were on foot and in all three the members of my own family took active part. We were ostracised because of our heterodox opinions about religion and therefore we enjoyed the freedom of the outcast. We had to build our own world with our own thoughts and energy of mind.

I was born and brought up in an atmosphere of the confluence of three movements, all of which were revolutionary. My family had to live its own life, which led me from my young days to seek guidance for my own self-expression in my own inner standard of judgment. The medium of expression doubtless was my mother tongue. But the language which belonged to the people had to be modulated according to the urge which I as an individual had.

No poet should borrow his medium ready-made from some shop of orthodox respectability. He should not only have his own seeds but prepare his own soil. Each poet has his own distinct medium of language—not because the whole language is of his own make, but because his individual use of it, having life's magic touch, transforms it into a special vehicle of his own creation.

The races of man have poetry in their heart and it is necessary for them to give, as far as is possible, a perfect expression to their sentiments. For this they must have a medium, moving and pliant, which can freshly become their very own, age after age. All great languages have undergone and are still undergoing changes. Those languages which resist the spirit of change are doomed and will never produce great harvests of thought and literature. When forms become fixed, the spirit either weakly accepts its imprisonment within them or rebels. All revolutions consist of the fight of the within against invasion by the without

There was a great chapter in the history of life on this earth when some irresistible inner force in man found its way out into the scheme of things, and sent forth its triumphant mutinous voice, with the cry that it was not going to be overwhelmed from outside by the huge brute beast of a body. How helpless it appeared at the moment, but has it not nearly won ? In our social life also, revolution breaks out when some power concentrates itself in outside arrangements and threatens to enslave for its own purpose the power which we have within us.

When an organisation which is a machine becomes a central force, political, commercial, educational or religious, it obstructs the free flow of inner life of the people and waylays and exploits it for the augmentation of its own power. Today, such concentration of power is fast multiplying on the outside and the cry of the oppressed spirit of man is in the air which struggles to free itself from the grip of screws and bolts, of unmeaning obsessions.

Revolutions must come and men must risk revilement and misunderstanding, especially from those who want to be comfortable, who put their faith in materialism, and who belong truly to the dead past and not to modern times, the past that had its age in distant antiquity when physical flesh and size predominated, and not the mind of man.

Purely physical dominance is mechanical and modern machines are merely exaggerating our bodies, lengthening and multiplying our limbs. The modern mind in its innate childishness delights in this enormous bodily bulk, representing an inordinate material power, saying : " Let me have the big toy and no sentiment which can disturb it." It does not realise that in this we are returning to that antediluvian age which revelled in its production of gigantic physical frames, leaving no room for the freedom of the inner spirit.

All great human movements in the world are related to some great ideal. Some of you may say that such a doctrine of spirit has been in its death-throes for over a century and is now moribund ; that we have nothing to rely upon but external forces and material foundations. But I say, on my part, that your doctrine was obsolete long ago. It was exploded in the spring time of life, when mere size was swept off the face of the world and was replaced by man, brought naked into the heart of creation, man with his helpless body, but with his indomitable mind and spirit.

When I began my life as a poet, the writers among our educated community took their guidance from their English text-books which poured upon them lessons that did not fully saturate their minds. I suppose it was fortunate for me that I never in my life had the kind of academic training which is considered proper for a boy of respectable family. Though I cannot say I was altogether free from the influence that ruled young minds of those days, the course of my writings was nevertheless saved from the groove of imitative forms. In my versification, vocabulary and ideas, I yielded myself to the vagaries of an untutored fancy which brought castigation upon me from critics who were learned, and uproarious laughter from the witty. My ignorance combined with my heresy turned me into a literary outlaw.

When I began my career I was ridiculously young ; in fact, I was the youngest of that band who had made themselves articulate. I had neither the protective armour of mature age, nor enough English to command respect. So in my seclusion of contempt and qualified encouragement I had my freedom. Gradually I grew up in years—for which, however, I claim no credit. Steadily I cut my way through derision and occasional patronage into a recognition in which the proportion of praise and blame was very much like that of land and water on our earth.

What gave me boldness when I was young was my early acquaintance with the old Vaishnava poems of Bengal, full of the freedom of metre and courage of expression. I think I was only twelve when these poems first began to be reprinted. I surreptitiously got hold of copies from the desks of my elders. For the edification of the young I must confess that this was not right for a boy of my age. I should have been passing my examinations and not following a path that would lead to loss of marks. I must also admit that the greater part of these lyrics was erotic and not quite suited to a boy just about to reach his teens. But my imagination was fully occupied with the beauty of their forms and the music of their words ; and their breath, heavily laden with voluptuousness, passed over my mind without distracting it.

My vagabondage in the path of my literary career had another reason. My father was the leader of a new religious movement, a strict monotheism based upon the teachings of the Upanishads.

My countrymen in Bengal thought him almost as bad as a Christian, if not worse. So we were completely ostracised, which probably saved me from another disaster, that of imitating our own past.

Most of the members of my family had some gift—some were artists, some poets, some musicians and the whole atmosphere of our home was permeated with the spirit of creation. I had a deep sense almost from infancy of the beauty of Nature, an intimate feeling of companionship with the trees and the clouds, and felt in tune with the musical touch of the seasons in the air. At the same time, I had a peculiar susceptibility to human kindness. All these craved expression. The very earnestness of my emotions yearned to be true to themselves though I was too immature to give their expression any perfection of form.

Since then I have gained a reputation in my country, but till very late a strong current of antagonism in a large section of my countrymen persisted. Some said that my poems did not spring from the national heart ; some complained that they were incomprehensible, others that they were unwholesome. In fact, I have never had complete acceptance from my own people, and that too has been a blessing ; for nothing is so demoralising as unqualified success.

This is the history of my career. I wish I could reveal it more clearly through the narration of my own work in my own language. I hope that will be possible some day or other. Languages are jealous. They do not give up their best treasures to those who try to deal with them through an intermediary belonging to an alien rival. We have to court them in person and dance attendance on them. Poems are not like market commodities transferable. We cannot receive the smiles and glances of our sweetheart through an attorney, however diligent and dutiful he may be.

I myself have tried to get at the wealth of beauty in the literature of the European languages, long before I gained a full right to their hospitality. When I was young I tried to approach Dante, unfortunately through an English translation. I failed utterly, and felt it my pious duty to desist. Dante remained a closed book to me.

I also wanted to know German literature and, by reading Heine in translation, I thought I had caught a glimpse of the beauty there. Fortunately I met a missionary lady from Germany and asked her help. I worked hard for some months, but being rather quick-witted, which is not a good quality, I was not persevering. I had the dangerous facility which helps one to guess the meaning too easily. My teacher thought I had almost mastered the language, which was not true. I succeeded, however, in getting through Heine, like a man walking in sleep crossing unknown paths with ease, and I found immense pleasure.

Then I tried Goethe. But that was too ambitious. With the help of the little German I had learnt, I did go through *Faust.* I believe I found my entrance to the palace, not like one who has keys for all the doors, but as a casual visitor who is tolerated in some general guest-room, comfortable but not intimate. Properly speaking, I do not know my Goethe, and in the same way many other great luminaries are dusky to me.

This is as it should be. Man cannot reach the shrine if he does not make the pilgrimage. So, one must not hope to find anything true from my own language in translation.

In regard to music, I claim to be something of a musician myself. I have composed many songs which have defied the canons of orthodox propriety and good people are disgusted at the impudence of a man who is audacious only because he is untrained. But I persist, and God forgives me because I do not know what I do. Possibly that is the best way of doing things in the sphere of art. For I find that people blame, but also sing my songs, even if not always correctly.

Please do not think I am vain. I can judge myself objectively and can openly express admiration for my own work, because I am modest. I do not hesitate to say that my songs have found their place in the heart of my land, along with her flowers that are never exhausted, and that the folk of the future, in days of joy or sorrow or festival, will have to sing them. This too is the work of a revolutionist.

If I feel reluctant to speak about my own view of religion, it is because I have not come to my own religion through the portals of passive acceptance of a particular creed owing to some accident of birth. I was born to a family who were pioneers in the revival in our country of a religion based upon the utterance of Indian sages in the Upanishads. But owing to my idiosyncrasy of temperament, it was impossible for me to accept any religious teaching on the only ground that people in my surroundings believed it to be true. I could not persuade myself to imagine that I had religion simply because everybody whom I might trust believed in its value.

My religion is essentially a poet's religion. Its touch comes to me through the same unseen and trackless channels as does the inspiration of my music. My religious life has followed the same mysterious line of growth as has my poetical life. Somehow they are wedded to each other, and though their betrothal had a long period of ceremony, it was kept secret from me. I am not, I hope, boasting when I confess to my gift of poesy, an instrument of expression delicately responsive to the breath that comes from depth of feeling. From my infancy I had the keen sensitiveness which always kept my mind tingling with consciousness of the world around me, natural and human.

I had been blessed with that sense of wonder which gives a child his right of entry into the treasure-house of mystery which is in the heart of existence. I neglected my studies because they rudely summoned me away from the world around me, which was my friend and my companion, and when I was thirteen I freed myself from the clutch of an educational system that tried to keep me imprisoned within the stone walls of lessons.

I had a vague notion as to who or what it was that touched my heart's chords, like the infant which does not know its mother's name, or who or what she is. The feeling which I always had was a deep satisfaction of personality that flowed into my nature through living channels of communication from all sides.

It was a great thing for me that my consciousness was never dull about the facts of the surrounding world. That the cloud was the cloud, that a flower was a flower, was enough, because they directly spoke to me, because I could not be indifferent to them. I still remember the very moment, one afternoon, when coming back from school I alighted from the carriage and suddenly saw in the sky, behind the upper terrace of our house, an exuberance of deep, dark rain-clouds lavishing rich, cool shadows on the atmosphere. The marvel of it, the very generosity of its presence, gave me a joy which was freedom, the freedom we feel in the love of our dear friend.

There is an illustration I have made use of in another paper, in which I supposed that a stranger from some other planet has paid a visit to our earth and happens to hear the sound of a human voice on the gramophone. All that is obvious to him, and most seemingly active, is the revolving disk; he is unable to discover the personal truth that lies behind, and so might accept the impersonal scientific fact of the disk as final—the fact that could be touched and measured. He would wonder how it could be possible for a machine to speak to the soul. Then if in pursuing the mystery, he should suddenly come to the heart of the music through a meeting with the composer, he would at once understand the meaning of that music as a personal communication.

Mere information of facts, mere discovery of power, belongs to the outside and not to the inner soul of things. Gladness is the one criterion of truth as we know when we have touched Truth by the music it gives, by the joy of the greeting it sends forth to the truth in us. That is the true foundation of all religions, it is not in dogma. As I have said before, it is not as ether waves that we receive light; the morning does not wait for some scientist for its introduction to us. In the same way, we touch the infinite reality immediately within us only when we perceive the pure truth of love or goodness, not through the explanation of theologians, not through the erudite discussion of ethical doctrines.

I have already confessed that my religion is a poet's religion, all that I feel about it, is from vision and not from knowledge. I frankly say that I cannot satisfactorily answer questions about the problem of evil, or about what happens after death. And yet I am sure that there have come moments when my soul has touched the infinite and has become intensely conscious of it through the illumination of joy. It has been said in our Upanishads that our mind and our words come away baffled from the supreme Truth, but he who knows That, through the immediate joy of his own soul, is saved from all doubts and fears.

In the night we stumble over things and become acutely conscious of their individual separateness, but the day reveals the great unity which embraces them. And the man, whose inner vision is bathed in an illumination of his consciousness, at once realises the spiritual unity reigning supreme over all differences of race and his mind no longer awkwardly stumbles over individual facts of separateness in the human world, accepting them as final ; he realises that peace is in the inner harmony which dwells in truth, and not in any outer adjustments ; and that beauty carries an eternal assurance of our spiritual relationship to reality, which waits for its perfection in the response of our love.

II

The renowned Vedic commentator, Sayanacharya, says :

> Yajñe hutāśishṭasya odanasya sarvajagatkāraṇabhūta
> Brahmābhedena stutih kriyate.

"The food offering which is left over after the completion of sacrificial rites is praised because it is symbolical of Brahma, the original source of the universe."

According to this explanation, Brahma is boundless in his superfluity which inevitably finds its expression in the eternal world process. Here we have the doctrine of the genesis of creation, and therefore of the origin of art. Of all living creatures in the world, man has his vital and mental energy vastly in excess of his need, which urges him to work in various lines of creation for its own sake. Like Brahma himself, he takes joy in productions that are unnecessary to him, and therefore representing his extravagance and not his hand-to-mouth penury. The voice that is just enough can speak and cry to the extent needed for everyday use, but that which is abundant sings, and in it we find our joy. Art reveals man's wealth of life, which seeks its freedom in forms of perfection which are an end in themselves.

All that is inert and inanimate is limited to the bare fact of existence. Life is perpetually creative because it contains in itself that surplus which ever overflows the boundaries of the immediate time and space, restlessly pursuing its adventure of expression in the varied forms of self-realisation. Our living body has its vital organs that are important in maintaining its efficiency, but this body is not a mere convenient sac for the purpose of holding stomach, heart, lungs and brains ; it is an image—its highest value is in the fact that it communicates its personality. It has colour, shape and movement, most of which belong to the superfluous, that are needed only for self-expression and not for self-preservation.

This living atmosphere of superfluity in man is dominated by his imagination, as the earth's atmosphere by the light. It helps us to integrate desultory facts in a vision of harmony and then to translate it into our activities for the very joy of its perfection, it invokes in us the Universal Man who is the seer and the doer of all times and countries. The immediate consciousness of reality in its purest form, unobserved by the shadow of self-interest, irrespective of moral or utilitarian recommendation, gives us joy as does the self-revealing personality of our own. What in common language we call beauty which is in harmony of lines, colours, sounds, or in grouping of words or thoughts, delights us only because we cannot help admitting a truth in it that is ultimate. " Love is enough," the poet has said ; it carries its own explanation, the joy of which can only be expressed in a form of art which also has that finality. Love gives evidence to something which is outside us but which intensely exists and thus stimulates the sense of our own existence. It radiantly reveals the reality of its objects, though these may lack qualities that are valuable or brilliant.

The *I am* in me realises its own extension, its own infinity whenever it truly realises something else. Unfortunately, owing to our limitations and a thousand and one preoccupations, a great part of our world, though closely surrounding us, is far away from the lamp-post of our attention : it is dim, it passes by us, a caravan of shadows, like the landscape seen in the night from the window of an illuminated railway compartment : the passenger knows that the outside world exists, that it is important, but for the time being the railway carriage for him is far more significant. If among the innumerable objects in this world there be a few that come under the full illumination of our soul and thus assume reality for us, they constantly cry to our creative mind for a permanent representation. They belong to the same domain as the desire of ours which represents the longing for the permanence of our own self.

I do not mean to say that things to which we are bound by the tie of self-interest have the inspiration of reality ; on the contrary, these are eclipsed by the shadow of our own self. The servant is not more real to us than the beloved. The narrow emphasis of utility diverts our attention from the complete man to the merely useful man. The thick label of market-price obliterates the ultimate value of reality.

The fact that we exist has its truth in the fact that everything else does exist, and the "I am" in me crosses its finitude whenever it deeply realises itself in the "Thou art." This crossing of the limit produces joy, the joy that we have in beauty, in love, in greatness. Self-forgetting, and in a higher degree, self-sacrifice, is our acknowledgement of this our experience of the infinite. This is the philosophy which explains our joy in all arts, the arts that in their creations intensify the sense of the unity which is the unity of truth we carry within ourselves. The personality in me is a self-conscious principle of a living unity ; it at once comprehends and yet transcends all the details of facts that are individually mine, my knowledge, feeling, wish and will, my memory, my hope, my love, my activities, and all my belongings. This personality which has the sense of the One in its nature, realises it in things, thoughts and facts made into units. The principle of unity which it contains is more or less perfectly satisfied in a beautiful face or a picture, a poem, a song, a character or a harmony of inter-related ideas or facts and then for it these things become intensely real, and therefore joyful. Its standard of reality, the reality that has its perfect revelation in a perfection of harmony, is hurt when there is a consciousness of discord—because discord is against the fundamental unity which is in its centre.

All other facts have come to us through the gradual course of our experience, and our knowledge of them is constantly undergoing contradictory changes through the discovery of new data. We can never be sure that we have come to know the final character of anything that there is. But such a knowledge has come to us immediately with a conviction which needs no arguments to support it. It is this, that all my activities have their source in this personality of mine which is indefinable and yet about the truth of which I am more certain than anything in this world. Though all the direct evidence that can be weighed and measured support the fact that only my fingers are producing marks on the paper, yet no sane man ever can doubt that it is not these mechanical movements that are the true origin of my writings but some entity that can never be known, unless known through sympathy. Thus we have come to realise in our own person the two aspects of activities, one of which is the aspect of law represented in the medium, and the other the aspect of will residing in the personality.

Limitation of the unlimited is personality : God is personal where he creates.

He accepts the limits of his own law and the play goes on, which is this world whose reality is in its relation to the Person. Things are distinct not in their essence but in their appearance ; in other words, in their relation to one to whom they appear. This is art, the truth of which is not in substance or logic, but in expression. Abstract truth may belong to science and metaphysics, but the world of reality belongs to Art.

The world as an art is the play of the Supreme Person revelling in image making. Try to find out the ingredients of the image—they elude you, they never reveal to you the eternal secret of appearance. In your effort to capture life as expressed in living tissue, you will find carbon, nitrogen and many other things utterly unlike life, but never life itself. The appearance does not offer any commentary of itself through its material. You may call it *Maya* and pretend to disbelieve it, but the great artist, the *Mayavin*, is not hurt. For art is *Maya*, it has no other explanation but it seems to be what it is. It never tries to conceal its evasiveness, it mocks even its own definition and plays the game of hide-and-seek through its constant flight in changes.

And thus life, which is an incessant explosion of freedom, finds its metre in a continual falling back in death. Every day is a death, every moment even. If not, there would be amorphous desert of deathlessness eternally dumb and still. So life is *Maya*, as moralists love to say, it *is* and *is not*. All that we find in it is the rhythm through which it shows itself. Are rocks and minerals any better ? Has not science shown us the fact that the ultimate difference between one element and another is only that of rhythm ? The fundamental distinction of gold from mercury lies merely in the difference of rhythm in their respective atomic constitution, like the distinction of the king from his subject which is not in their different constituents, but in the different metres of their situation and circumstance. There you find behind the scene the Artist, the Magician of rhythm, who imparts an appearance of substance to the unsubstantial.

What is this rhythm ? It is the movement generated and regulated by harmonious restriction. This is the creative force in the hand of the artist. So long as words remain in uncadenced prose form, they do not give any lasting feeling of reality. The moment they are taken and put into rhythm they vibrate into a radiance. It is the same with the rose. In the pulp of its petals you may find everything that went to make the rose, but the rose which is *Maya*, an image, is lost ; its finality which has the touch of the infinite is gone. The rose appears to me to be still, but because of its metre of composition it has a lyric of movement within that stillness, which is the same as the dynamic quality of a picture that has a perfect harmony It produces a music in our consciousness by giving it a swing of motion synchronous with its own. Had the picture consisted of a disharmonious aggregate of colours and lines, it would be deadly still.

In perfect rhythm, the art-form becomes like the stars which in their seeming stillness are never still, like a motionless flame that is nothing but movement. A great picture is always speaking, but news from a newspaper, even of some tragic happening, is still-born. Some news may be a mere commonplace in the obscurity of a journal ; but give it a proper rhythm and it will never cease to shine. That is art. It has the magic wand which gives undying reality to all things it touches, and relates them to the personal being in us. We stand before its productions and say : I know you as I know myself, you are real.

A Chinese friend of mine, while travelling with me through the streets in Peking, suddenly, with great excitement, called my attention to a donkey. Ordinarily a donkey does not have any special force of truth for us, except when it kicks us or when we need its reluctant service. But in such cases, the truth is not emphasised in the donkey but in some purpose or bodily pain exterior to it. The behaviour of my Chinese friend at once reminded me of the Chinese poems in which the delightful sense of reality is so spontaneously felt and so simply expressed.

This sensitiveness to the touch of things, such abundant delight in the recognition of them is obstructed when insistent purposes become innumerable and intricate in our society, when problems crowd in our path clamouring for attention, and life's movement is impeded with things and thoughts too difficult for a harmonious assimilation.

This has been growing evident every day in the modern age, which gives more time to the acquisition of life's equipment than to the enjoyment of it. In fact, life itself is made secondary to life's materials, even like a garden buried under the bricks gathered for the garden wall. Somehow the mania for bricks and mortar grows, the kingdom of rubbish dominates, the days of spring are made futile and the flowers never come.

Our modern mind, a hasty tourist, in its rush over the miscellaneous, ransacks cheap markets of curios which mostly are delusions. This happens because its natural sensibility for simple aspects of existence is dulled by constant preoccupations that divert it. The literature that it produces seems always to be poking her nose into out-of-the-way places for things and effects that are out of the common. She racks her resources in order to be striking. She elaborates inconsistant changes in style, as in modern millinery ; and the product suggests more the polish of steel than the bloom of life.

Fashions in literature that rapidly tire of themselves seldom come from the depth. They belong to the frothy rush of the surface, with its boisterous clamours for the recognition of the moment. Such literature, by its very strain, exhausts its inner development and quickly passes through outer changes like autumn leaves—produces with the help of paints and patches an up-to-dateness shaming its own appearance of the immediately preceding date. Its expressions are often grimaces, like the cactus of the desert which lacks modesty in its distortions and peace in its thorns, in whose attitude an aggressive discourtesy bristles up suggesting a forced pride of poverty. We often come across its analogy in some of the modern writings which are difficult to ignore because of their prickly surprises and paradoxical gesticulations. Wisdom is not rare in these works, but it is a wisdom that has lost confidence in its serene dignity, afraid of being ignored by crowds which are attracted by the extravagant and the unusual. It is sad to see wisdom struggling to seem clever, a prophet arrayed in caps and bells before an admiring multitude.

But in all great arts, literary or otherwise, man has expressed his feelings that are usual in a form that is unique and yet not abnormal. When Wordsworth described in his poem a life deserted by love, he invoked for his art the *usual* pathos expected by all normal minds in connection with such a subject. But the picture in which he incarnated the sentiment was unexpected and yet every sane reader acknowledges it with joy when the image is held before him of

> . . . . a forsaken birds's nest filled with snow
> Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine.

On the other hand, I have read some modern writing in which the coming out of the stars in the evening is described as the sudden eruption of disease in the bloated body of darkness. The writer seems afraid to own the feeling of a cool purity in the star-sprinkled night which is *usual*, lest he should be found out as commonplace. From the point of view of realism the image may not be wholly inappropriate and may be considered as outrageously virile in its unshrinking incivility. But this is not art ; this is a jerky shriek, something like the convulsive advertisement of the modern market that exploits mob psychology against its inattention. To be tempted to create an illusion of forcefulness through an over-emphasis of abnormality is a sign of anaesthesia. It is the waning vigour of imagination which employs desperate dexterity in the present-day art for producing shocks in order to poke out into a glare the sensation of the unaccustomed. When we find that the literature of any period is laborious in the pursuit of a spurious novelty in its manner and matter, we must know that it is the symptom of old age, of anaemic sensibility which seeks to stimulate its palsied taste with the pungency of indecency and the tingling touch of intemperance. It has been explained to me that these symptoms mostly are the outcome of a reaction against the last century literature which developed a mannerism too daintily saccharine, unmanly in the luxury of its toilet and over-delicacy of its expressions. It seemed to have reached an extreme limit of refinement which almost codified its conventions, making it easy for the timid talents to reach a comfortable level of literary respectability. This explanation may be true ; but unfortunately reactions seldom have the repose of spontaneity, they often represent the obverse side of the mintage which they try to repudiate as false. A reaction against a particular mannerism is liable to produce its own mannerism in a militant fashion, using the toilet preparation of the war paint, deliberately manufactured style of primitive rudeness. Tired of the elaborately planned flower-beds, the gardener proceeds with grim determination to set up everywhere artificial rocks, avoiding natural inspiration of rhythm in deference to a fashion of tyranny which itself is a tyranny of fashion. The same herd instinct is followed in a cult of rebellion as it was in the cult of conformity and the defiance, which is a mere counteraction of obedience, also shows obedience in a defiant fashion. Fanaticism of virility produces a brawny athleticism meant for a circus and not the natural chivalry which is modest but invincible, claiming its sovereign seat of honour in all arts.

It has often been said by its advocate that this show of the rudely loud and cheaply lurid in art has its justification in the unbiased recognition of facts as such ; and according to them realism must not be shunned even if it be ragged and evil-smelling. But when it does not concern science but concerns the arts we must draw a distinction between realism and reality. In its own wide perspective of normal environment, disease is a reality which has to be acknowledged in literature. But disease in a hospital is realism fit for the use of science. It is an abstraction which, if allowed to haunt literature, may assume a startling appearance because of its unreality. Such vagrant spectres do not have a proper modulation in a normal surrounding ; and they offer a false proportion in their features because the proportion of their environment is tampered with. Such a curtailmet of the essential is not art, but a trick which exploits mutilation in order to assert a false claim to reality. Unfortunately men are not rare who believe that what forcibly startles them allows them to see more than the facts which are balanced and restrained, which they have to woo and win. Very likely, owing to the lack of leisure, such persons are growing in number, and the dark cellars of sex-psychology and drug-stores of moral virulence are burgled to give them the stimulus which they wish to believe to be the stimulus of aesthetic reality.

I know a simple line sung by some primitive folk in our neighbourhood which I translate thus : "My heart is like a pebble-bed hiding a foolish stream." The psycho-analyst may classify it as an instance of repressed desire and thus at once degrade it to a mere specimen advertising a supposed fact, as it does a piece of coal suspected of having smuggled within its dark the flaming wine of the sun of a forgotten age. But it is literature; and what might have been the original stimulus that startled this thought into a song, the significant fact about it is that it has taken the shape of an image, a creation of a uniquely personal and yet universal character. The facts of the repression of a desire are numerously common; but this particular expression is singularly uncommon. The listener's mind is touched not because it is a psychological fact, but because it is an individual poem, representing a personal reality, belonging to all time and place in the human world.

But this is not all. This poem no doubt owed its form to the touch of the person who produced it; but at the same time with a gesture of utter detachment, it has transcended its material—the emotional mood of the author. It has gained its freedom from any biographical bondage by taking a rhythmic perfection which is precious in its own exclusive merit. There is a poem which confesses by its title its orign in a mood of dejection. Nobody can say that to a lucid mind the feeling of despondency has anything pleasantly memorable. Yet these verses are not allowed to be forgotten, because directly a poem is fashioned, it is eternally freed from its genesis, it minimises its history and emphasises its independence. The sorrow whch was solely personal in an emperor, was liberated directly it took the form of verses in stone, it became a triumph of lament, an overflow of delight hiding the black boulder of its suffering source. The same thing is true of all creation. A dewdrop is a perfect integrity that has no filial memory of its parentage.

When I use the word creation, I mean that through it some imponderable abstractions have assumed a concrete unity in its relation to us. Its substance can be analysed but not this unity which is in its self-introduction. Literature as an art offers us the mystery which is in its unity.

We read the poem:

Never seek to tell thy love
    Love that never told can be;
For the gentle wind does move
    Silently, invisibly.
I told my love, I told my love,
    I told all my heart;
Trembling cold in ghastly fears
    Ah, she did depart.

Soon as she was gone from me
    A traveller came by;

Silently, invisibly,
He took her with a sigh.

It has its grammar, its vocabulary. When we divide them part by part and try to torture out a confession from them the poem which is *one*, departs like the gentle wind, silently, invisibly. No one knows how it exceeds all its parts, transcends all its laws, and communicates with the person. The significance which is in a unity is an eternal wonder.

As for the definite meaning of the poem, we may have our doubts. If it were told in ordinary prose, we might feel impatient and be roused to contradict it. We would certainly have asked for an explanation as to who the traveller was and why he took away love without any reasonable provocation. But in this poem we need not ask for an explanation unless we are hopelessly addicted to meaning-collection which is like the collection mania for dead butterflies. The poem as a creation, which is something more than as an idea, inevitably conquers our attention; and any meaning which we feel in its words, is like the feeling in a beautiful face of a smile that is inscrutable, elusive and profoundly satisfactory.

The unity as a poem introduced itself in a rhythmic language in a gesture of character. Rhythm is not merely in some measured blending of words, but in a significant adjustment of ideas, in a music of thought produced by a subtle principle of distribution, which is not primarily logical but evidential. The meaning which the word character contains is difficult to define. It is comprehended in a special grouping of aspects which gives it an irrestible impetus. The combination it represents may be uncouth, may be unfinished, discordant; yet it has a dynamic vigour in its totality which claims recognition, often against our wishes for the assent of our reason. An avalanche has a character, which even a heavier pile of snow has not; its character is in its massive movement, its incalculable possibilities.

It is for the artist to remind the world that with the truth of our expression we grow in truth. When the man-made world is less an expression of man's creative soul than a mechanical device for some purpose of power, then it hardens itself, acquiring proficiency at the cost of the subtle suggestiveness of living growth. In his creative activities man makes nature instinct with his own life and love. But with his utilitarian energies he fights Nature, banishes her from his world, deforms and defiles her with the ugliness of his ambitions.

This world of man's own manufacture with its discordant shrieks and swagger, impresses on him the scheme of a universe which has no touch of the person and therefore no ultimate significance. All the great civilisations that have become extinct must have come to their end through such wrong expression of humanity ; through parasitism on a gigantic scale bred by wealth, by man's clinging reliance on material resources ; through a scoffing spirit of denial, of negation, robbing us of our means of sustenance in the path of truth.

It is for the artist to proclaim his faith in the everlasting YES—to say : " I believe that there is an ideal hovering over and permeating the earth, an ideal of that Paradise which is not the mere outcome of fancy, but the ultimate reality in which all things dwell and move."

I believe that the vision of Paradise is to be seen in the sunlight and the green of the earth, in the beauty of the human face and the wealth of human life, even in objects that are seemingly insignificant and unprepossessing. Everywhere in this earth the spirit of Paradise is awake and sending forth its voice. It reaches our inner ear without our knowing it. It tunes our harp of life which sends our aspiration in music beyond the finite, not only in prayers and hopes, but also in temples which are flames of fire in stone, in pictures which are dreams made everlasting, in the dance which is ecstatic meditation in the still centre of movement.

17. ITRAT HUSAIN ZUBERI

[So young and yet so profound !—is the inevitable conclusion that flashes upon one's mind as one peruses the solid literary research work of this distinguished thirty-five year old Muslim Professor. His work at his age is indeed an object-lesson to his colleagues in this country ! Born at Meerut (U.P.) in 1910, Mr. Zuberi had his education at St. John's College, Agra, and the University of Allahabad. Later, he joined the Edinburgh University and worked for four years under Sir Herbert J. C. Grierson, the greatest living authority on 17th Century English Literature. Mr. Zuberi was awarded the Ph.D. degree of the Edinburgh University for his thesis on " Mysticism in English Poetry of the Seventeenth Century." He was also the recipient of a Carnegie Research Scholarship in English from the same University—the first Indian to obtain the award. The work that Mr. Zuberi did as a Research Scholar is embodied in the volume—*The Dogmatic and Mystical Theology of John Donne.* This was published in 1938 by Macmillans Ltd., for "The Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge," London. This is the only work of an Indian which this famous Society has ever published. The volume was the subject of a leading complimentary article in *The Times Literary Supplement*, London, for March 5, 1938. "It is remarkable," observed the writer of the article, " that an Indian scholar should be the author of so precise a study as this of Donne's Anglican Theology . . . From whichever angle this reef is bored, the essay yields gold." In the Preface to the book, Sir Herbert Grierson wrote : " The first is my feeling of surprise and respect that a study of John Donne should have been carried out so fully, intelligently and lucidly by an Indian . . ." A second valuable book of Dr. Zuberi under the title " The Mystical Element in the Metaphysical Poets of the Seventeenth Century"—is soon to be published by Oliver & Boyd (Edinburgh and London), with a Preface by Miss Evelyn Underhill. " The Carnegie Trust for the Promotion of Research in British Universities" has made a grant of £150 for the publication of this book—the first grant ever made by the Trust to an Indian Scholar's work on English Literature. Yet another important work of Dr. Zuberi—"T. S. Eliot as a Metaphysical Poet "—is expected to be published shortly. He has also published many other valuable papers and beautiful poems in different Indian and foreign periodicals. On his return to India in 1938, Dr. Zuberi was appointed as senior Professor of English in Class I of the Bengal Educational Service. Since 1941 he has been Principal and Professor of English, Islamia College, Calcutta. The essay reproduced below originally appeared in the pages of *The Visva-*

Bharati Quarterly for August 1939, and deals with the extremely interesting subject of the influence of the great Metaphysical poet of the Seventeenth Century on Post-war English Poetry. That John Donne is a living inspiration to some modern English poets is a fact only vaguely known to many. Dr. Zuberi analyses the causes and nature of this influence, and incidentally points out the necessity and reasonableness of modern Indian poets also drawing their inspiration from the fountain of Donne's poetry.]

JOHN DONNE

[*A Study of his Influence on the Post-War English Poetry*]

The influence of John Donne (1572-1631) on the post-war English poetry is not so curious a phenomenon as it first appears to be, for the post-war poets discovered a close affinity with the school of Donne, and realised the significance of the tradition which has descended from Donne to the other Metaphysical poets of the seventeenth cntury.

It may at first seem surprising that a poet who was not long ago considered to be mediaeval, should exercise so great a fascination on the minds of the sceptical and disillusioned modern poets that during the last ten years he has become perhaps the most widely read poet in England after Shakespeare.

The legend of Donne's mediaevalism arose because of his immense learning which embraced the whole field of scholastic philosophy and mediaeval theology, the New Learning, the Hermetic physics, the new Science of Copernicus, Galileo and Bacon, and because in the words of Donne, " the immoderate desire for human learning and languages," took him to the untrodden and unfamiliar bye-paths of mediaeval learning.

It is well to remember here that Donne's great grandmother was a sister of Sir Thomas More, who translated the great mediaeval scholar Pico Mirandola : curiously enough the first biographer of Donne in the seventeenth century, Isak Walton, has compared Donne's scholarship to that of Mirandola. He says that it was remarked of Donne " that this age had brought forth another Picus Mirandola," of whom story says " that he was rather born, than made, wise by study."

Though Donne was one of the greatest scholars of his age, the extent of his learning has no doubt been exaggerated by his recent critics, like Miss Ramsay and others. There is no reason to suppose that his learning was greater or more mediaeval than that of his other great contemporaries like Hooker or Bishop Andrewes. In fact, what surprised his contemporaries was not the mediaeval cast of his mind but the freshness and originality of his wit and poetic invention.

Critics like Walton and Edward Phillips admired the "sharpness of his wit"* and "the gaiety of his fancy." The whole temper of Donne's mind as revealed in his poetry is far from being mediaeval; it is essentially that of the Renaissance. Sir Herbert Grierson has pointed out that he had "a temperament which was rather that of the Renaissance than that either of Puritan England or of the Counter-Reformation, the temperament of Raleigh and Bacon rather than of Milton or Herbert or Crashaw."

But it is significant that Donne never became the Renaissance debauchee like Robert Green or a confirmed sceptic and athiest like Marlowe, though in his youth he was a typical young man of the Renaissance, eager for pleasure and worldly advancement. A contemporary of Donne, Sir Richard Baker, calls him "not dissolute but very neat; a great visitor of ladies, a great frequenter of plays, a great writer of conceited verse," one who in his poetry delightfully scoffed at women, and ridiculed fidelity in love, for he held that

> Change is the nursery
> of musicke, joy, life and eternity.
> ("Change")

It is the earlier Donne of "Songs and Sonets," "Elegies and Satyres," rather than the saintly Donne of "Devotions and Sermons," that has influenced T. S. Eliot and through him the other younger poets. There is nothing mediaeval in the love poetry and satires of Donne; they are the very antithesis of mediaeval chivalry and the idealisation of womanhood; in them we discover the exultant dawn of the Renaissance spirit in English poetry. Indeed, the nature of Donne's thought even in his devotions and sermons cannot be called mediaeval

The aim of mediaeval philosophers, like St. Thomas Aquinas, was to achieve a vast and unique synthesis and unification of all knowledge, a *Summa* was the end to be attained. Donne does not attempt to unify his vast knowledge or to reduce it to an organic system of thought; his method in poetry as well as in theology and Philosophy was mainly analytical. He was the curious explorer of the human soul, interested in the psychology of experience, whether of sensuous love or mystical illumination. We find in him the disintegration of mediaeval thought and scholastic method ; even in his lyric poetry there is no background of an ideal unity in poetic or religious experience as we find in the poetry of Dante or Lucretius.

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* Walton's *Lives*. Edited by T. Zouch. p. 120.
E. Phillips, *Theatrum Poetrum Anglicanorum*, (1675). Vol. II. P. 2-3.

It is this disintegration of mediaeval thought and chivalric tradition in his poetry that perhaps fascinated post-war poets like T. S. Eliot, through whom the tradition of Donne has influenced the other poets like Herbert Read, W. H. Auden, and Cecil Day Lewis. T. S. Eliot and others discovered in Donne their own awareness of the decay and dissolution of the Victorian compromise and perhaps also of the Democratic and Liberal era which was born with the French Revolution.

It is this strange similarity between the post-Elizabethan and the post-war periods that accounts for the influence of Donne, for in his poetry and prose were reflected the scepticism and the intellectual curiosity of the Renaissance and the ardour and passionate quest for the religious and mystical experience that characterised the Reformation. Donne in this sense held up the mirror to his age as no other Elizabethan poet except Shakespeare had done. He had revolted against the Spenserian and Petrarchan tradition in Elizabethan poetry ; there is no courtly grace of love in his poetry. He declared bravely :

> Such in loves warfare is my case,
> I may not article for grace,
> Having put love at least to shew this face.
>
> (" Loves Exchange ")

In a similar manner T. S. Eliot in our age has rebelled against the Romantic and Miltonic tradition in the English poetry of the 19th Century. Donne's influence in the seventeenth, as in the twentieth, century has been primarily a technical influence in the sense that it enlarged the domain of feeling and perception for the poets who followed him. Carew, who was his contemporary, realised the true significance of Donne's revolt against the Petrarchan tradition, and of the new quality of his language which was pruned of all the mythological luxuriance of the Elizabethan lyric verse. Carew said :

> The Muses garden with Pendantique Weedes
> O'rspred, was purg'd by thee ; the lazie seeds
> Of servile imitation throwne away :
> And fresh invention planted....*

He praised Donne for having enlarged the province of poetry.

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* Carew's " Elegie upon the death of Dean of Pauls, Dr. John Donne. "

See " Elegies upon the Author "—*Donne's Poetical Works*, edited by H. J. C. Grierson, 1912 All the quotations are from this standard edition.

He pointed out that he had

> open'd us a Mine
> Of rich and pregnant phansie, drawne a line
> Of masculine expression.

The "Mine" was in fact the realm of psychological experience that Donne has made available to poetry, and the new poetic imagery he grew, as Dr. Johnson said, from "the store-house of mediaeval learning."

It is in this two-fold technical sense that Donne has influenced T. S. Eliot and through him the younger poets. T. S. Eliot has given to the problem of poetic technique an important place in his criticism, holding "that the poet has no personality" to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways, and in the communication of these experiences the technique of the poet is of prime importance.*

Donne fashioned a poetic idiom in which intellect, emotion and thought were fused into a significant poetic pattern. He also incorporated erudition in his poetic sensibility, and though he banished mythology from his poetry, scholastic philosophy and the New Learning took its place. T. S. Eliot has given a similar place in his poetry to Anthropology and the philosophical concepts derived from Hebrew and mystical literature.

Donne gave a new energy and intellectual suppleness to his poetic language which is both learned and simple. T. S. Eliot has pointed out that while Donne is an intellectual poet, Tennyson and Browning are merely *reflective* poets. He has said that "A thought to Donne was an experience ; it modified his sensibility." He makes us think. Donne, quite contrary to the mediaeval view† of physical love, has proclaimed the sanctity of the body.

> As our blood labours to beget
> Spirits, as like soules as it can,
> Because such fingers need to knit
> That subtile knot that makes us man :
> So must pure lovers soules descend
> T' affections, and to faculties,
> Which sense may reach and apprehend
> Else a great Prince in prison lies.
>
> ("The Extasie")

It is thus not true to assert, as Mr. Lewis has done, that Donne draws " distinctions between spirit and flesh to the detriment of the latter."*

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* *Selected Essays* (p. 19-20).

† Mr. F. C. Lewis in *The Allegory of Love* (p. 14) has said that for the mediaeval church "Love itself was wicked and did not cease to be wicked if the object of it were your own wife."

He refined the poetic idiom so that it could aptly express the fine shades of his subtle thought. Donne is in this sense as great a reformer of the English language as Dryden. " He first made it possible to think in lyric verse, and at the same time retained a quality of song and the suggestion of instrumental accompaniment of the earlier lyric. No poet has excelled him in this peculiar combination of qualities."† He created a poetic idiom through which he was able to express the consciousness of his age ; in a similar manner T. S. Eliot, Auden, and others have fashioned an idiom which, while retaining the intellectual vigour of Donne's conceits, has acquired the conversational ease of modern speech. Donne and T. S. Eliot both have a command over the intricacies of poetic felicity such as these in an occasional poem :

> First her eyes kindle other Ladies eyes,
> Then from their beams their jewels lusters rise,
> And from their jewels torches do take fire,
> And all is warmth, and light, and good desire.‡

And T. S. Eliot can switch us from the terrible emptiness of " The Wasteland " to the purity of a love song :

> You gave me hyacinths first a year ago
> They called me the hyacinth girl,
> Yet when we came back, late, from the hyacinth garden
> Your arms full and your hair wet, I could not
> Speak and my eyes failed, and I was neither
> Living nor dead and I knew nothing
> Looking into heart of light, the Silence.

Though T. S. Eliot told me some two years ago that Donne has only influenced the technique of his earlier verse, there is no doubt that the terrifying honesty of Donne as revealed in his devotional poems and sermons has also helped him to express with rare psychological insight the agony of the purgative stage of his own religious life. His soul, however, is less tormented than that of Donne and he seems to be on his way as revealed in " Ash-Wednesday " and the " Ariel poems " to achieve a humility and sense of reconciliation more akin to the peaceful assurance of Herbert than to the " holy discontent " of Donne.

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* "Donne and love poetry in the seventeenth century", by C. S. Lewis. In *Seventeenth Century Studies Presented to Sir Herbert Grierson*, (Oxford, 1938).

† *A Garland for John Donne*—Edited by T. Spenser. Camb. 1931.

‡ "Eccologue, December 26, 1613, at the Marriage of the Earle of Sommerset."

T. S. Eliot after the purgatory of the " The Wasteland " and the spiritual emptiness of " The Hollow Men ", has given us a glimpse of the mystical peace for which he yearns. He has said :

> Not for me the martyrdom, the ecstasy of thought and prayer,
> Not for me the ultimate vision,
> Grant me thy peace.*

In " Ash-Wednesday ", the " Journey of the Magi ", and " A Song for Simeon " and in part of " The Murder in the Cathedral," T. S. Eliot has given us the finest and most genuine devotional verse of our time and this he was able to accomplish by incorporating the method, technique and idiom of Donne in his own poetic sensibility.

The other two elements of Donne's technique and thought which have influenced the English poets like Herbert Read and Auden, and the American poets like John Ransom and Elinor Wylie, and his peculiar scepticism and his attitude towards Sex are his ironic insight into the psychology of love where he has emphasised the interdependence of the soul and body. Man is body and soul and these two cannot be separated in the experience of love.

> Love's not so pure and abstract as they use
> To say, which have no Mistress but their Muse,
> But as all else being elemented too,
> Love sometimes would contemplate, sometimes do.
> (" Loves growth ")

He held that body and soul are interdependent, for,

> Loves mysteries in soules doe grow,
> But yet the body is his booke.
> (" The Extasie ")

The cause of *tension* in the poetry of Donne was the sceptical and naturalistic element in his thought which led him to repudiate the chivalric and worshipful attitude towards women as we find in Sidney, Spenser and the other Elizabethan sonneteers. The scepticism of Donne was the starting point of his search for Truth and shows the integrity of his mind. As early as 1594 he declared (in his III Satyre) :

> ' doubt wisely ; in strange way
> To stand inquiring right, is not to stray ;†

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* " A Song for Simeon. "

† The quotation would gain in significance for the Indian reader, if the previous line in the original text were also quoted. It should then read

To adore, or scorne an image, or protect
May all be bad; doubt wisely; in strange way
To stand inquiring right, is not to stray; (Editor)

Though Donne outlived the sceptical and rationalistic element in his thought and achieved through mystical faith " a modest assurance " of his Salvation, his followers in the secular line, such as Henry King, Townshend and Andrew Marvell, all have imitated the mixture of his peculiar philosophy of love and scepticism, and his characteristic conceits ; and they too have mingled levity with seriousness as in Marvell's great poem " To His Coy Mistress," where in a poem written in a light-hearted manner, he gives us these magnificent lines :

> But at my back I alwais hear
> Times winged charriot hurrying near;
> And yonder all before us lye
> Deserts of vast Eternity.
> The Grave is a fine and private place,
> But none I think do there embrace.

The conceit of the last two lines is in the true tradition of Donne and is a fine example of the imaginative surprise in a metaphysical poem. Donne has employed a similar conceit in a frivolous poem called " The Will."

> Therefore I'll give no more ; But I'll undoe
> The world by dying ; because love dies too.
> Then all your beauties will be no more worth
> Than gold in Mines, where none doth draw it forth ;
> And all your graces no more use shall have
> Than a Sun dyall in a grave.

Though no poet in our time has been able to achieve the grandeur of the sepulchral quality of Donne's conceits, such as " A bracelet of bright haire, about the bone," Herbert Read has successfully employed the austerity of Donne's conceipts as in the description of lovers :

> Their lips
> Are held in the tension of lust, and lines
> Of unlightened care have cut
> Across the mask upon the bone.

Herbert Read does not try to escape from reality into a dreamworld which solaced the Romantic poets of the nineteenth century. In his poem " Mutations of the Phoenix " we find the intensity of poetic conception and the bony and stark quality of Donne's imagery. He says :

> The flame
> burns all
> uses
> the ducts and chambers of our tunnelled flesh,

to focus flame
to its innate intensity.

In Ransom's "Spectral Lovers" and Elinor Wylie's "Angels and Earthly Creatures," we distinctly notice the influence of Donne's technique and his conceits. The following lines of Elinor Wylie are in the true tradition of Donne :

The ashes of this error shall exhale
Essential variety, and two by two
Lovers devout and loyal shall renew
The legend, and refuse to let it fail.

Donne has taught these poets to fuse intellect with emotion and achieve that integrity of thought which is essential to all great poetry. He has enabled them to avoid the romantic fallacy of Shelley, as described by T. S. Eliot, that "when Shelley has some definite statement to make, he simply says it ; keeps his image on one side and his meaning on the other."

No English poet of the past has exercised a greater influence on the post-war poets than Donne, for they too have realised the interdependence of the soul and body in a passionate experience ; their prosody too has the ease and vigour of conversational speech ; and their aim is not only to concentrate on the psychology of their own experience, but also to raise it to a metaphysical significance which transcends and universalises that experience. Thus the influence of Donne has enabled the poets of to-day to *discover* themselves, and through this discovery to interpret the peculiar consciousness of our age and to create a poetic idiom through which they have expressed the cynicism, the disillusioned and tormented mind of this age as well as its efforts to realise the richness of the religious and mystical life of the individual soul.

It is high time that the young poets in India also freed themselves from the mythological luxuriance of Romantic thought and their escapist tendencies, and to achieve the integrity of the poetic self and vision by studying more closely the Metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century. We have laboured too long under the spell and influence of the 19th cetury Romantic poets from Wordsworth to Rossetti, a period for which our Universities in India have shown an unnecessary overfondness.

Donne deserves to be better known in India to-day, for he is, as Ben Jonson called him, "the first poet in the world for some things." The scepticism of his early thought, the cynicism of his wit, the freshness and originality of his poetic invention and above all the terrifying honesty of his soul whose progress we can watch from " the evaporations of wit " as Donne called his " Paradoxes and Problems " to the agony of Purgation in the Holy Sonnets and lastly to the mystical faith of his magnificent Sermons ; all these various phases of his thoughts have points of contact with the manifold facets of our own age. The poets of to-day can also say with Donne that " Contraries meet in me."

It is through Donne, as T. S. Eliot has confessed, that the modern poets have "elicited their own talents," and found that "fulness of satisfaction "* which they could not discover in any other English poet of the past.

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* *A Garland for John Donne.*

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